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REPRINT  
OF  
THE ORIGINAL LETTERS  
FROM  
WASHINGTON TO JOSEPH REED,  
DURING  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

REFERRED TO IN THE PAMPHLETS OF LORD MAHON AND MR. SPARKS.

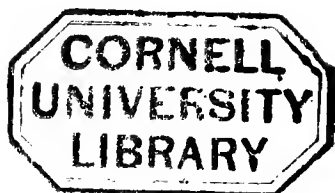
BY  
WILLIAM B. REED.

*and Lord*



PHILADELPHIA:  
A. HART, LATE CAREY AND HART.  
1852.

A. 6155.



PHILADELPHIA:

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.



## INTRODUCTION.

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THE object of this republication of original letters may be briefly stated. In or before the year 1834, I forwarded to Mr. Sparks, then engaged in preparing his edition of the Works of Washington, copies of a series of letters from the Commander-in-Chief to my ancestor, General Reed, written from Cambridge in the years 1775 and 1776. They were private and confidential, and, on that account, very interesting and valuable. Mr. Sparks printed a number of these letters. He thought it right to omit certain passages in them, and to make some alterations of phraseology, and it is possible, though I have no recollection of it, he apprised me of having done so at the time. He certainly did, at a later period, in 1838.

In 1847, thirteen years after Mr. Sparks's publication, appeared my Biography of Reed. In it, I printed the Washington letters from the originals; the only variations being occasional corrections of grammar and spelling, and the omission of one or

two sentences, evidently the result of oversight on my part.

In 1851, Lord Mahon published the fifth and sixth volumes of "The History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," and noticed the difference of text between Mr. Sparks's work and mine.

Hence has arisen a controversy in which, on each side, an appeal has, at least impliedly, been made to me, as a disinterested witness, to place before the public the exact truth with regard to these manuscripts.

I have thought it my duty to reprint the letters, and to have them carefully collated, so that even literal variations may be noted. It will thus be seen that the imputed blemishes on Washington's style, as a rapid and inartificial letter-writer, have been much exaggerated. The originals are open to the inspection of any one who may desire to look at them. In adopting this course, and abstaining from controversy, I am actuated by a sense of duty to all parties. Justice to Lord Mahon obliges me to show exactly how this difficulty began. He has himself, in the handsomest manner, withdrawn one of the charges he made, and is entitled to the testimony these documents afford to the integrity of the motive which led to the error. Justice to Mr. Sparks requires me to relieve him, by the actual exhibition of the papers, from the charge of having made additions to the text of the Washington letters. Justice to myself and my character as a faithful contributor to history, imperatively requires me to place distinctly

before the public the actual state of these manuscripts, and to have them properly attested; for I have felt, more than once, in the progress of this discussion, that, should the original papers be destroyed, an accident to which manuscripts are especially exposed, a serious imputation might rest on me for having interpolated the very passages which Mr. Sparks thought proper to omit. The only safe rule seems to be that which was adopted by Chief-Justice Marshall long ago. I have before me an unpublished letter from him to the printer of his *Life of Washington* in 1804, in answer to an urgent request for the suppression of a passage calculated to give pain to living persons. The request was assented to, but explicit direction given to mark the fact that a passage was omitted. This course, as far as possible, I endeavored to adopt in my *Life of Reed*.

In the following pages, the reader will find accurately noted the variations between the original manuscripts and the copies printed by myself and Mr. Sparks. I cannot, in justice, note one without the other. In this way, an accurate judgment may be formed of the real extent of the alterations. I have thought it best to reprint every one of the letters which have been selected by Mr. Sparks, even when he copied, not from my originals, but from the letter-books, in order to show, as a mere matter of literary curiosity, how far *they* differ.

The letters in question were part of a private correspondence, the most friendly and unreserved.

Hence, in my opinion, their value. Their true interest depends on being the exact transcript of what the writers thought and wrote. It was the hearty, familiar letter-writing of two friends, between whom there had grown up, in the daily and hourly intercourse of the same quarters in the "Rebel" camp, the most implicit, unsuspecting confidence. Mr. Reed was not exactly, at the age of thirty-three, of that class of thoughtless young men with whom it has been intimated Washington, himself but little over forty, was surrounded.\* From June to October, 1775, Washington and his "First Secretary" had occupied the same house, lived at the same table, shared the same dangers and responsibilities, watched and counselled together as two men of affectionate unreserve are apt to do; and when they were separated, the confidence was not interrupted, the unreserve not broken; and Washington writing to Reed in Philadelphia, was as if Washington were talking to Reed, in the anxious seclusion of the headquarters at Cambridge. Such are these letters in their original form. At the time of their publication, I had no doubt that it was my duty to print them exactly as they were written. I have never doubted it since.

The portions of the following letters omitted ac-

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\* North American Review, July, 1852, p. 203. I may venture to observe that not a little of the asperity which has disfigured this controversy is attributable to the very unkind tone which anonymous writers (always more or less irresponsible) have thought proper to adopt.

cidentally by me are noted at the foot of each page, and those omitted by Mr. Sparks are in Italics, his changes of phraseology and omissions being marked with a letter S. in the margin.

WILLIAM B. REED.

PHILADELPHIA, *November* 16, 1852.



# LETTERS.

## WASHINGTON TO REED.

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### I.

CAMBRIDGE, 8th November,  
1775.

DEAR SIR,

The Shipwreck of a Vessel, said to be from Philadelphia to Boston, near Plymouth, with 120 pipes of wine; 118 of *which*<sup>1</sup> are saved—another from Boston to Halifax, near Beverly, with about £240 worth of dry goods—the taking of a wood vessel, bound to Boston, by Captain Adams—and the sudden departure of Mr. Randolph, (occasioned by the death of his uncle,) are all the occurrences worth noticing, which have happened since *you left this*.<sup>2</sup>

I have ordered the wine and goods to this place, for sale; as also the papers; the latter may unfold secrets that may not be pleasing to some of your townsmen; and which, so soon as known, will be communicated.

I have been *happy enough*<sup>3</sup> to convince Captain McPherson, as he says, of the propriety of returning to the Congress—he sets out this day, and I am *happy* in his having an oppor-

<sup>1</sup> S. “of which one hundred and eighteen.”

<sup>2</sup> S. “since your departure.”

<sup>3</sup> S. “I have convinced.”  
“happy enough” is Italicized in the original.

tunity of laying before them a scheme for the destruction of the naval force of G. Britain. A letter and journal of Colonel Arnold's, to the 13th ultimo, is come to hand,<sup>4</sup> copy of which I inclose to the Congress, and by application to Mr. Thompson you can see. I think he is in Quebec,—if I hear nothing more of him in five days I shall be sure of it.

<sup>4</sup> S. "are" come to hand.

I had like to have forgot what sets<sup>5</sup> heaviest upon my mind; the new arrangement of officers, although we have not enough to constitute the new corps, it *hath*<sup>6</sup> employed the general officers and myself ever since Thursday last, and we are nearly as we begun.

<sup>5</sup> S. "sits."

<sup>6</sup> S. "has."

Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corp. Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity for a Rhode Islander\* to be introduced *amongst them*;<sup>7</sup> and New Hampshire says it's very hard that her valuable and experienced officers, (who are willing to serve,) should be discarded, because her own regiments under the new establishment cannot provide for them.

<sup>7</sup> S. "into hers."

In short, after a *four*† days' labour, I expect that numbers of officers who have given in their names to serve, must be

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\* These words "for a Rhode Islander" are not printed by me.

† Printed by me as by Mr. Sparks "few."



discarded *from Massachusetts*,<sup>8</sup> (where the regiments have been numerous, and the number in them small,) *and Connecticut*<sup>9</sup> compleated with a fresh recruit of officers from *its*<sup>10</sup> own government. This will be departing not only from the principals of common justice, but from the letter of the Resolve agreed on at this place; but at present I see no help for it. We are to have another meeting upon the matter this day, when something must be hit upon, as time is slipping of. My compliments to Mrs. Reed, and to all inquiring friends. I am, with sincerity and truth, dear sir,

Your affectionate humble  
servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

<sup>11</sup>*P. S. I had just finished my letter when a blundering Lieut<sup>m</sup> of the blundering Capt<sup>n</sup> Coit, who had just blundered upon two vessels from Nova Scotia, came in with the acc<sup>t</sup> of it, and before I could rescue my letter, without knowing what he did, picked up a candle and sprinkled it with grease; but these are kind of blunders which one can readily excuse. The vessels contain hay, live-stock, poultry, &c., and are now safely moor'd in Plymouth harbour.*

*Yours, &c.*

*G. W——n.*

<sup>8</sup> S. "from the Massachusetts corps."

<sup>9</sup> S. "that of Connecticut."

<sup>10</sup> S. "her."

<sup>11</sup> The Postscript omitted by Mr. Sparks.

## II.

CAMBRIDGE,  
20th Novr 1775.

DEAR SIR

*Your letters of the 4th from New York, 7th and— from Philadelphia, (the last by express) are all before me, and gave me the pleasure to hear of your happy meeting with Mrs. Reed, without any other accident than that of leaving a horse by the way.*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> S. Omitted by Mr. Sparks.

The hint contain'd in the last of your letters respecting your continuance in my family; in other words, your wish that I could dispense with it, gives me pain. You already, my dear sir, knew my sentiments on this matter; you cannot but be sensible of your importance to me: at the same time, I shall again repeat what I have observ'd to you before, that I can never think of promoting my convenience at the expence of your interest and inclination. That I feel the want of you, *yourself can judge*,<sup>13</sup> when I inform you that the peculiar situation of Mr. Randolph's affairs obliged him to leave *this*<sup>14</sup> soon after you did—that Mr. Baylor, contrary to my expectation, is not in the smallest degree a penman, though spirited and willing—

<sup>13</sup> S. You can judge that I feel the want, &c.

<sup>14</sup> S. "this place."

and that Mr. Harrison, though sensible, *clever*,<sup>15</sup> and perfectly confidential, has never yet moved upon so large a scale as to comprehend at one view the diversity of matter which comes before me, so as to afford that ready assistance which every man in my situation must stand more or less in need of. Mr. Moylan, it is true, is very obliging; he gives me what assistance he can, but other business must necessarily deprive me of his aid in a very short time. This is my situation:—judge you, therefore, how much I wish'd for your return, especially as the armed vessels, and the capitol change (in the state of this army) about to take place, have added an *additional*<sup>16</sup> weight to a burthen before too great for me to stand under, with the smallest degree of comfort to my own feelings. My mind is now fully disclosed to you, with this assurance sincerely and affectionately accompanying<sup>17</sup> it, that whilst you are disposed to continue with me, I shall think myself too fortunate and happy to wish for a change.

Doctr. Morgan, (as director of the hospital,) is exceedingly wanted at this place, and ought not to delay his departure for the camp a moment, many regu-

<sup>15</sup> S. "clear," obviously a misprint.

<sup>16</sup> S. "a new weight."

<sup>17</sup> S. "of" omitted. It is also omitted by me.

lations being *delayed*,<sup>18</sup> and accounts postpon'd till his arrival.

<sup>19</sup>*I have given G. S. and Col. P. a hint of the prevailing reports in Connecticut, without intimating from what quarter they came (for indeed I have received them through different channels) in order to put them upon their guard; they both deny the charge roundly, and wish for an opportunity of vindication. I thought as this information had come to my ears in different ways, it was best to speak to these gentlemen in terms expressive of my abhorance of such conduct, and of the consequences that might flow from it, and think it will have a good effect.* The method you have suggested of<sup>20</sup> the advanced pay, I very much approve of, and would adopt but for the unfortunate cramp'd state of our Treasury, which keeps us for ever under the Hatches. Pray urge the necessity of this measure to such members as you may converse with, and the want of cash to pay the troops for the months of Oct<sup>r</sup> and Nov<sup>r</sup>, as also to answer the demands of the commissary — quartermaster and — contingencies. To do all this, a considerable sum will be necessary. Do not neglect to put that wheel in motion, which is

<sup>18</sup> S. "deferred."

<sup>19</sup> The passage in Italics omitted.

<sup>20</sup> S. "concerning the advanced pay."

to bring us the shirts, medicines, &c. from New York—they are much wanting here, and cannot be had, I should think, upon better terms than on a loan from the best of kings, so anxiously disposed to promote the welfare of his American subjects.

Dr. Church is gone to Gov. Trumbull, to be disposed of in a Connecticut gaol, without the use of pen, ink, and paper,—to be convers'd with in the presence of a magistrate only, and in the English language;—so much for indiscretion the doctor will say. Your accounts of our dependance upon the people of Great Britain, I religeously believe; it has long been my political creed, that the Ministry *durst not*<sup>21</sup> have gone on as they did, but under the firmest persuasion that the people were with them. The weather has been unfavourable, however, for the arrival of their transports,—only four companies of the 17th regiment, and two of the artillery, are yet arrived by our last advices from Boston.

Our *Rascally*<sup>22</sup> privateersmen go on at the old rate, mutinying if they cannot do as they please. Those at Plymouth, Beverly, and Portsmouth, have done nothing worth mentioning in ye prize way, and no accounts are

<sup>21</sup> S. "would not have dared."

<sup>22</sup> S. "rascally" omitted.

yet received from those further eastward.

Arnold, by a letter which left him the 27th ult. had then only got to the Chaudiere Pond, and was scarce of provisions: his rear division, under the command of *the noble*<sup>23</sup> Colonel Enos, had, without his privity or consent, left him with three companies, and his expedition (inasmuch as it is to be apprehended that Carlton, with the remains of such force as he had been able to raise, would get into Quebec before him,) I fear, in a bad way; for further particulars I refer you to Mr. Hancock, *who has enclosed to him*<sup>24</sup> copies of Arnold's and Enos's letters. The last named person is not yet arrived at this camp.

I thank you for your frequent mention of Mrs. Washington. I expect she will be in Philadelphia about the time this letter may reach you, on her way hither; as she and her conductor (who *I expect*<sup>25</sup> will be Mr. Custis, her son,) are perfect strangers to the road, the stages, and the proper place to cross Hudson's River, (by all means avoiding New York,) I shall be much obliged *in*<sup>26</sup> your particular instructions, and advice to her. I *do*<sup>27</sup> imagine, as the roads are

<sup>23</sup> S. "the noble" omitted. It is Italicized in the autograph by Washington.

<sup>24</sup> S. "to whom are enclosed."

<sup>25</sup> S. "I suppose."

<sup>26</sup> S. "by your particular instructions."

<sup>27</sup> S. "do" omitted.

bad, and the weather cold, her stages must be short, especially as *I expect*<sup>28</sup> her horses will be *pretty much*<sup>29</sup> fatigued, as *they will, by the time she gets* to Philadelphia, have performed a journey of at least 450 miles, my express *finding of*<sup>\*</sup> her among her friends near Williamsburg, 150 miles below my own house.

<sup>30</sup> *As you have mentioned nothing in your letters of the cannon, &c., to be had from N Yk, Ticonderoga, &c, I have, in order to reduce the matter to a certainty, employed Mr. Knox to go to those places, compleat our wants, and to provide such military stores as St. John's can spare.*

My respectful compliments to Mrs. Reed, &c.

Be assured that I am,  
Dear sir, with affectionate  
regard,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

*Flints are greatly wanted here.*<sup>†</sup>

<sup>28</sup> S. "I presume."

<sup>29</sup> S. "pretty much" omitted, and "when they get to Philadelphia" instead of "by the time she gets."

<sup>30</sup> S. The rest of the letter omitted.

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\* The word "of" omitted by me, and printed "having found" by Mr. Sparks.

† This "P. S." omitted by me and by Mr. Sparks. It is written along the margin in the original.

## III.

CAMBRIDGE, 28th Nov. 1775.

DEAR SIR,

*By post I wrote to you yesterday in answer to your letter of the 16th since which*<sup>31</sup> your favours of the 15th and 17th are come to hand. In one of *these*<sup>32</sup> you justly observe that the sudden departure of Mr. Randolph must cause your absence to be the more sensibly felt. I can truly assure you that I miss you exceedingly, and if an express declaration *of this*<sup>33</sup> be wanting to hasten your return, I make it most heartily, and with some pleasure, as Mr. Lynch, in a letter of the 13th (*received with yours,*)<sup>34</sup> gives this information. "In consequence of your letter by Colonel Reed, I applied to the Chief Justice, who tells me the Supreme Courts are lately held, and that it will be some time before their term will return, that he knows of no capitol suit now depending, and that it is very easy for Colonel Reed to manage matters so as not to let that prevent his return to you;\* I am sure Mr. Chew is so heartily disposed to oblige you, and

<sup>31</sup> S. Part in Italics omitted.<sup>32</sup> S. "In one of *them*."<sup>33</sup> S. "of this" omitted.<sup>34</sup> S. "omitted."

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\* The words "that prevent" omitted by me.



to serve the cause, that nothing in his power will be wanting."

I could wish, my good friend, that these things may give a spur to your inclination to return, and that I may see you here as soon as convenient, <sup>as</sup><sup>35</sup> I feel the want of your ready pen, &c. greatly.

<sup>35</sup> S. "for."

What an astonishing thing it is that those who are employed to sign the Continental Bills should not be able or inclined to do it as fast as they are wanted. They will prove the destruction of the army if they are not more attentive and diligent. Such a dearth of publick spirit\* and<sup>36</sup> want of virtue, such stock-jobbing and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages, of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and *pray God*<sup>37</sup> I may never be witness to again. What will be the *ultimate*<sup>38</sup> end of these manouvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time enlisting about 3500 men. To engage these, I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as 50 men a<sup>39</sup> Regiment; and the officers, I am persuaded, indulge as many more.

<sup>36</sup> S. "*such want.*"

<sup>37</sup> S. "pray God's *mercy.*"

<sup>38</sup> S. "ultimate" omitted.

<sup>39</sup> S. "*to a regiment.*"

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\* "Spirit" omitted by me.

The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term, (saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and<sup>40</sup> mostly on furlough,) and such a *dirty*,<sup>41</sup> mercenary spirit pervades the whole that I should not be at all surpriz'd at any disaster that may happen. In short, after the last of this month, our lines will be so weaken'd that the minute men and militia must be call'd in for their defense, — <sup>42</sup>these being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been labouring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am endeavouring to avoid another; but the *lesser*<sup>43</sup> must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have,<sup>44</sup> and am like to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command. A regiment or any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction,—perhaps the honour.

<sup>45</sup>*I think I informed you in my letter of yesterday, that we had taken possession of,\* and had fortified Cobble Hill, and several points round the Bay, between*

<sup>40</sup> S. "and are."

<sup>41</sup> S. "dirty" omitted.

<sup>42</sup> S. "and these."

<sup>43</sup> S. The "*less*."

<sup>44</sup> S. "experienced."

<sup>45</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

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\* "Of" omitted by me.

*that and Roxbury. In a night or two more, we shall begin our work on Litchmore's Point; when, doubtless, we shall be honour'd with their notice, unless Gen'l Howe is waiting the favourable moment he has been told of, to aim a capitol blow; which is my fixed opinion.*

The Congress already know, from the general estimate given in (for a month) what sum it will take to supply *this*<sup>46</sup> army; and that little less than 275,000 dollars will answer the purpose.

<sup>46</sup> S. "*the army.*"

Pray impress this upon the members, and the necessity of forwarding the last sum voted, as 100,000 dollars will be *but a flea-bite*<sup>47</sup> to our demands at this time. <sup>48</sup>*Did I not in one of my late letters inform you, that I had sent Mr. Knox throw New York to General Schuyler to see what artillery I could get from those places? He has been set out upon this business about ten days, and I hope will fall in with the Committee of Congress. Powder is also so much wanted, that nothing without it can be done.*

<sup>47</sup> S. "totally inadequate."

<sup>48</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

I wish that matter respecting the punctilio, hinted at by you, could come to some decision of Congress. I have done nothing yet in respect to the proposed exchange of prisoners, nor shall I *now*<sup>49</sup> until I hear from them,

<sup>49</sup> S. "now" omitted.

or you, on this subject. I am sorry Mr. White met with a disappointment in the Jerseys, as I could wish not to be under the necessity, from any former encouragement given him, of taking him into my family. I find it is absolutely necessary that the Aids to the Commander-in-Chief, should be ready at their pen (which I believe he is not) to *give*<sup>50</sup> that ready assistance that is expected of them; <sup>51</sup>*I shall make a lame hand therefore to have two of this kidney.*

It would give me singular pleasure to provide for those two gentlemen mentioned in your letter, but believe me, it is beyond the powers of conception to *discover*<sup>52</sup> the absurdities and partiality of these people, and the trouble and vexation I have had in the new arrangement of officers. After five, I think, different meetings of the gen'l officers, I have in a manner been obliged to *give in*<sup>53</sup> to the humour and whimsies of the people, or get no army. The officers of one government would not serve in the Regiments of another, (although there was to be an entire new creation)—a capt'n must be in this Regiment, a subaltern in that company; in short I can scarce tell at this moment

<sup>50</sup> S. "to render," and "ready" omitted.

<sup>51</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>52</sup> S. "to realize."

<sup>53</sup> S. "to yield."

in what manner they are fixed. Some time hence strangers may be brought in, but it could not be done now, except in an instance or two, without putting too much to *the*<sup>54</sup> hazard.

<sup>55</sup>*I have this inst<sup>t</sup> by express received the agreeable news of the capitulation of Montreal. The acct of it, you also, undoubtedly have. Poor Arnold, I wonder where he is. Enos left him with the rear division of his army, and is now hear under arrest.*

What can your brethren of the law mean by saying your perquisites as Secretary must be considerable? I am sure they have not amounted to one farthing. Captain Blewer waits, and therefore, I shall add no more than that I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and  
affectionate servant,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

*P. S.*<sup>56</sup> *Please to let Col<sup>o</sup> Lee know that I answer'd his query by last post respecting the arm'd vessels of this Province, and those fitted out by the Continent.*

<sup>54</sup> S. "to hazard."

<sup>55</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

<sup>56</sup> S. Postscript omitted.

## IV.

CAMBRIDGE, 30th Novr 1775.\*

DEAR SIR,

Two days ago I wrote fully to you by Captain Blewer—to this letter I refer, since which your fav<sup>r</sup> of the 20th, with the agreeable Postscript of the 21st, is come to hand, and demands my acknowledgments for the civility intended Mrs. Washington by you, &c.

I have a very singular pleasure in informing of† you, that by express last night from Cape Ann, I received the glad tidings of the capture of the Nancy store-ship from London, by Captn. Manley, contents as p<sup>r</sup> the inclosed copy, (taken by Mr. Pierce, to save me, you must know, the trouble of innumeration.) He, unluckily, miss'd the greatest prize in the world; their whole ordinance, the ship containing it being just ahead, but he could not have got both; and we must be thankful, as I truly am, for this instance of Divine favour; for nothing, surely, ever came more a propos—that no part of it may slip throw my fingers, (for I have

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\* This letter is not printed at length in Mr. Sparks's collection, but an extract will be found in a note at p. 157 of his 3d volume. The part extracted is within brackets on the next page.

† "Of" omitted by me.

no doubt as this capture was made in sight of the other vessel, of there being some bold push to recover it) I instantly upon receiving the acct, ordered four companies down to protect the stores; teams to be impress'd to remove them without delay; and Col<sup>o</sup> Glover to assemble the minute men in the neighbourhood of Cape Ann, to secure the removal to places of safety.

The colouring of that affair at Litchmore's Point has been rather too high. [The alacrity of the riflemen and officers upon that occasion did them honour, to which Col Patterson's regiment and some others were equally entitled, except in a few instances; but the tide, at that time was so exceedingly high as to compel a large circuit before our men could get to the *Causey*,<sup>57</sup> by which means the enemy, except a small covering party, (distant from the dry land on this side near four hundred yards,) had retreated, or were about to embark; all the shot therefore that pass'd were at a great distance; however, the men went to and over the Causey, (*except as before mentioned*,)<sup>58</sup> spiritedly enough.

This little manouvre of the enemy is nothing more than a prelude. We have certain advice

<sup>57</sup> S. "causeway."

<sup>58</sup> S. "except as before mentioned" omitted.

of a scoundrel from Marblehead, a man of property, having carried into General How a true state\* of the temper and disposition of the troops, towards the new Inlistment; and *hath*<sup>59</sup> given him the strongest assurances of the practicability of making himself master of these lines in a very short time, from the *disaffection of the soldiery to continue in service*.<sup>60</sup> I am endeavouring to counteract him, how effectually time alone can show.

I began our bomb-battery *on*<sup>61</sup> Litchmore's Point last night; the workg party came off *at day*<sup>62</sup> without having met with any interruption; the weather favour'd our operations, the earth being clear of frost; *not*<sup>63</sup> an officer in the army *but looks for*<sup>64</sup> an attack. This has no effect upon the Connecticut regiments, they are resolved to go off.] My best respects to Mrs. Reed and any other friends. Be assured I am, dear sir, yr affecto

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

<sup>59</sup> S. "hath" omitted, and printed by me "having."

<sup>60</sup> S. "disaffection of the soldiers to the service."

<sup>61</sup> S. "at."

<sup>62</sup> S. "in the morning."

<sup>63</sup> S. "there is not."

<sup>64</sup> S. "who does not look for."

## V.

CAMBRIDGE, 15th Decr 1775.

DEAR SIR

Since my last I have had the pleasure of receiving your fa-



vours of the 28th ulto. and 2d inst<sup>t</sup>. I must again express my gratitude for the attentions *shewn*<sup>65</sup> Mrs. Washington at Philadelphia. It cannot but be pleasing, altho it did in some measure impede the progress of her journey *on the road*.<sup>66</sup> I am much obliged to you for the hints contained in both of the above letters, respecting the jealousies which you say are gone abroad. I have studiously avoided, in all letters *intended*<sup>67</sup> for the publick eye, I mean for that of the Congress,—every expression that could give pain or uneasiness;—and I shall observe the same rule with respect to private letters, *further*<sup>68</sup> than appears absolutely necessary for the illucida- tion of facts. I cannot charge myself with incivility, or what, in my opinion, is tantamount, ceremonious civility, to the Gentlemen of this Colony; but if such my conduct appears, I will endeavour at a reformation, as I can assure you, my dear Reed, that I wish to walk in such a line as will give most general satisfaction. You know that it was my wish at first to invite a certain number of *gentlemen*<sup>69</sup> of this Colony every day to dinner, but unintentionally, <sup>70</sup>*I believe by any body*, we some how or other missed of it; if this has

<sup>65</sup> S. “shown to.”

<sup>66</sup> S. “on the road” omitted.

<sup>67</sup> S. “calculated.”

<sup>68</sup> S. “*any* further.”

<sup>69</sup> S. “*the gentlemen*.”

<sup>70</sup> S. “I believe by any body” omitted.

given rise to the jealousy, I can\* only say that I am sorry for it; at the same time I add, that it was rather owing to inattention, or more properly too much attention to other matters, which caused me to neglect it. The extracts of letters from this camp which so frequently appear in the Pens<sup>a</sup> papers, are not only written without my knowledge, but without my approbation; as I have always thought they must have a *disagreeable*<sup>71</sup> tendency; but there is no restraining men's tongues or pens when charged with a little vanity, as in the accounts given of, or rather by the riddlemen.

With respect to what you have said of yourself, and situation, *to what I have before said on this subject*,<sup>72</sup> I can only add, that whilst you leave the door open to my expectation of your return, I shall not think of supplying your place—if, ultimately, you resolve against coming, I should be glad to know it, as soon as you have determined *upon it*.<sup>73</sup> The congress have resolv'd well in respect to the pay of *and advance to*<sup>74</sup> the men; but if they cannot get the money signers to dispatch their

<sup>71</sup> S. "unfavorable."

<sup>72</sup> S. Transposed "I can only add to what I have before said on this subject." The word "before" omitted by me.

<sup>73</sup> S. "upon it" omitted.

<sup>74</sup> S. "and advance to" omitted.

business, it is of very little avail, for we have not at this time money enough in Camp to answer the commissary's and our master's accts, much <sup>75</sup>more\* to pay and advance to the troops.

*Strange conduct this!*<sup>76</sup>

The acct which you have given of the sentiments of the people respecting my conduct is extremely flattering, *Pray God*<sup>77</sup> I may continue to deserve them <sup>78</sup>in the perplex'd and intricate situation *I stand in*. Our enlistment goes on slowly† by the returns last Monday, only 5,917 men are engaged for the insuing campaign; and yet we are told that we shall get the number wanted as they are only playing off, to see what advantages are to be made, and whether a bounty cannot be extorted either from the publick at large, or individuals, in case of a draft; time only can discover this. I doubt the measure exceedingly. The fortunate capture of the storeship has supplied us with flints and many other articles we stood in need of—But we still have our wants. <sup>79</sup>*We are securing our approach to Litchmore's Point, unable upon any principle whatever to account for their silence, unless it be to lull*

<sup>75</sup> S. "less."

<sup>76</sup> S. "Strange conduct this!" omitted.

<sup>77</sup> S. "I pray God."

<sup>78</sup> S. "in my perplexed and intricate situation."

<sup>79</sup> S. Part in Italics omitted.

\* Printed "less" by me.

† Printed by me "slow."

*us into a fatal security to favour some attempt they may have in view about the time of the great change they expect will take place the last of this month. If this be the drift, they deceive themselves, for, if possible, it has increas'd my vigilance, and induced me to fortify all the avenues to our camps, to guard against any approaches upon the ice.*

*If the Virginians are wise, that arch-traitor to the rights of humanity, Lord Dunmore, should be instantly crush'd, if it takes the force of the whole Colony to do it—otherwise, like a snow-ball, in rolling, his army will get size—some through fear—some through promises—and some from\* inclination joining his standard—but that which renders the measure indispensably necessary, is, the negros;—for if he gets formidable, numbers of them will be tempted to join, who will be affraid to do it without. I am exceeding happy to find that that villain Connolly is seized; I hope if there is any thing to convict him, that he will meet with the punishment due to his demerit and treachery.*

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\* Printed by me “through.” This passage about Lord Dunmore is repeated, though not quite in so strong language, in a letter to Richard Henry Lee, eleven days later, which is printed by Mr. Sparks, vol. iii. p. 216.

*We impatiently wait for acct<sup>s</sup> from Arnold—would to God we may hear he is in Quebec—and that all Canada is in our possession. My best respects to Mrs. Reed.*

*I am, dear sir, yr  
affect<sup>e</sup> H<sup>ble</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.*

*P. S. The small-pox is in every part of Boston—the soldiers there who have never had it, are, we are told, under inoculation, and consider'd as a security against any attempt of ours—a third ship-load of people is come out to Point Shirley. If we escape the small-pox in this camp, and the country round about, it will be miraculous. Every precaution that can be, is taken, to guard against this evil, both by the General Court and myself.*

*G. W——n.*

## VI.

CAMBRIDGE, 25<sup>th</sup> Decr 1775.

DEAR SIR,

*<sup>80</sup> Since my last, your favours of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> are come to hand, as also the 8<sup>th</sup>; the first last night, the second by Wednesday's Post; for the several pieces of information therein contain'd, I thank you.*

<sup>80</sup> S. The passages in Italics omitted.

*Nothing new has happened in this quarter since my last, except the setting in of a severe spell of cold weather, and a considerable fall of snow; which together have interrupted our work on Litchmore's Point; which otherwise, would have been compleated before this. At first we only intended a bomb battery there, but afterwards, constructed two redoubts, in one of which a mortar will be placed at a proper season—a line of communication extends from the point of wood this side the Causey, leading on to Litchmore's Point, quite up to the redoubt. From Boston and Bunker's Hill both, we have received (without injury, except from the first case shott) an irregular fire from cannon and mortars ever since the 17th, but have return'd none except upon the ship; which we soon obliged to move off. At the same time that I thank you for stopping visiters in search of preferment, it will give me pleasure to show civilities to others of your recommendation. Indeed no gentleman that is not well known, ought to come here, without letters of introduction as it puts me in an awkward situation with respect to my conduct towards them.*

I do not very well<sup>s1</sup> under-      s1 S. "much."

stand a paragraph in your letter which seems to be taken from mine to Col Hancock, expressive of the unwillingness of the Connecticut troops to be deemed Continental. <sup>82</sup>*If you did not misconceive what Col Hancock read—he read what I never wrote; as there is no expression in any of my letters that I can either recollect, or find, that has a tendency that way; further than their unwillingness to have officers of other governments mixed in their corps, in which they are not singular, as the same partiality runs through the whole. I have, in some measure, anticipated the desires of the Connecticut Delegates, by a kind of representation to each of the New England Governments of the impracticability (in my eye)*<sup>83</sup> of raising our compliment of men by voluntary enlistments, and submitting *it*<sup>84</sup> to their consideration, whether (if the powers of Government were sufficiently coercive) each Town should not be called upon for a proportionate number of recruits; what they will do in the matter remains to be known. The militia w<sup>ch</sup><sup>85</sup> have supplied the places of the Connecticut Regiments, behave much better than I expected,<sup>86</sup> under our wants of wood, barracks, (for

<sup>82</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>83</sup> S. “in my eye” omitted.

<sup>84</sup> S. “it” omitted.

<sup>85</sup> S. “who.”

<sup>86</sup> S. “they would.”

*they are not yet done*,)<sup>87</sup> blankets, &c. : *with these*<sup>88</sup> and such *men*<sup>89</sup> as are re-inlisted I shall hope, if they will be vigilant and spirited, to give the enemy a warm reception if they think proper to come out. Our want of powder is inconceivable—a daily waste, and no supply, *ad-ministers*<sup>90</sup> a gloomy prospect.

I fear the *destination*<sup>91</sup> of the vessels from your port is so generally known, as to defeat the end. Two men-of-war (*forty guns*)<sup>92</sup> it is said, put into New York the other day, and were *instantly*<sup>93</sup> ordered out, supposed to be for Virginia.

I am so much indebted for the civilities shown Mrs. Washington on her journey hither, that I hardly know how *to go about*<sup>94</sup> to acknowledge them. Some of the enclosed (all of which I beg the favour of you to put into the post office) are directed to that end. I shall be obliged to you for presenting my thanks to the commanding officers of the two battalions of Phila, for the *honours*<sup>95</sup> done her and me, as also to any others equally entitled. I very sincerely offer you the compliments of the season, and wish you and Mrs. Reed, and your fireside, the happy return of a *great*<sup>96</sup> many of them, being, dear sir, your

<sup>87</sup> S. "for they are not yet done" omitted.

<sup>88</sup> S. "*men*."

<sup>89</sup> S. "men" omitted.

<sup>90</sup> S. "*present*."

<sup>91</sup> S. "detention," obviously a misprint.

<sup>92</sup> S. "forty guns" omitted.

<sup>93</sup> S. "immediately."

<sup>94</sup> S. "to go about" omitted.

<sup>95</sup> S. "honour."

<sup>96</sup> S. "great" omitted.



most obed<sup>t</sup> and affecte<sup>d</sup> H<sup>b</sup>le  
serv<sup>t</sup>,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## VII.

CAMBRIDGE, 4<sup>th</sup> Jany 1776.

DEAR SIR

<sup>97</sup> *Since my last I have rec<sup>d</sup>* <sup>97</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.  
*your obliging favours of the 19<sup>th</sup>*  
*and 23<sup>d</sup> ulto. and thank you for*  
*the articles of intelligence therein*  
*contained, as I also do for the*  
*buttons which accompanied the*  
*last letter, altho' I had got a set*  
*better, I think, made at Concord.*  
*I am exceeding\* glad to find that*  
*things wear a better face in Vir-*  
*ginia than they did some time*  
*ago; but I do not think that*  
*any thing less than y<sup>e</sup> life or*  
*liberty, will free the Colony from*  
*the effects of Lord Dunmore's*  
*resentments and villainies.*

We are at length favour'd  
with a sight of his Majesty's  
most gracious speech, breathing  
sentiments of tenderness and  
compassion for his deluded  
American subjects; the eccho  
is not yet come to hand, but we  
know what it must be, and as  
Lord North said, and we ought  
to have believed, (and acted ac-  
cordingly,) we now know the

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\* Printed by me "exceedingly."

ultimatum of British justice. The speech I send you; a volume of them was sent out by the Boston gentry, and farcical enough, we gave great joy to them, (*the red coats I mean*),<sup>98</sup> without knowing or intending it, for on that day, the day which gave being to the new army, (but before the proclamation came to hand) we had hoisted the Union Flag in compliment to the United Colonies; but behold! it was received in Boston as a token of the deep impression the Speech had made upon us, and as a signal of submission, so we *learn*<sup>99</sup> by a person out of Boston last night. By this time, I presume, they begin to think it strange that we have not made a formal surrender of our Lines. Admiral Shuldham is arrived at Boston. The 55th and *greatest*<sup>100</sup> part, if not all the 17th regiment are also *got in there*; <sup>101</sup> the rest of the 5 regiments from Ireland were intended for Hallifax and Quebec; <sup>102</sup>*those for the first, have arrived there, the others, we know not where they are got to.*

It is easier to conceive than to describe the situation of my mind for some time past, and my feelings under our present circumstances; Search the *vast*<sup>103</sup> volumes of history through, and

<sup>98</sup> S. "the red coats I mean" omitted.

<sup>99</sup> S. "hear;" and "heard" by me.

<sup>100</sup> S. "the greater."

<sup>101</sup> S. "arrived."

<sup>102</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>103</sup> S. Omitted.

I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found; to wit, to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, without ———<sup>104</sup> and *at the end of them*,<sup>105</sup> to have one army disbanded, and another *to raise*,<sup>106</sup> within the same distance of a reinforced enemy; it is too much to attempt—what may be the final issue of the last manœuvre, time only *can tell*.<sup>107</sup> I wish this month was well over our heads. The same desire of retiring into a chimney corner, seized the troops of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, (so soon as their time expired,) as had *work'd*<sup>108</sup> upon those of Connecticut, notwithstanding many of them made a tender of their services to continue till the lines could be sufficiently strengthened. We are now left with a good deal less than half-raised regiments, and about five thousand militia, who only stand engaged to the middle of this month, when, according to custom, they will depart, let the necessity of their stay be *never*<sup>109</sup> so urgent; thus *it is, that*<sup>110</sup> for more than two months past I have scarcely immersed from one difficulty, before I have<sup>111</sup> plunged into another. How it will end, God in his great goodness will direct; I

<sup>104</sup> S. "powder." There is a blank line drawn in the original.

<sup>105</sup> S. "then."

<sup>106</sup> S. "to be raised."

<sup>107</sup> S. "can unfold."

<sup>108</sup> S. "wrought."

<sup>109</sup> S. "ever," and by me.

<sup>110</sup> S. "it is that" omitted.

<sup>111</sup> S. "been."

am thankful for his protection to this time. We are told that we shall soon get the army compleated, but I have been told so many things which have never come to pass, that I distrust every thing.

I fear your fleet has been so long in fitting, and the destination of it so well known, that the end will be defeated if the vessels escape. How is the arrival of French troops in the West Indies, and the hostile appearance there, to be reconciled with that part of the King's speech wherein he assures Parliament "that as well from the assurances I have received as from the general appearance of affairs in Europe, I see no probability that the measures which you may adopt will be interrupted by disputes with any foreign power."

I hope the Congress will not think of adjourning at so important and critical a juncture as this. I wish they would keep a watchful eye to New York. From *Capt'n Sears' acct*<sup>112</sup> (now here) much is to be apprehended from that quarter. <sup>113</sup>*A fleet is now fitting out at Boston, consisting of five transports and two bomb-vessels, under convoy of the Scarborough and Fowey men-of-war. Three hundred, some say,*

<sup>112</sup> S. "from the account of Captain Sears."

<sup>113</sup> S. The rest of the letter in Italics omitted.

*others more, troops are on board, with flat-bottom'd boats. It is whisper'd, as if designedly, that they are intended for New-Port, but it is generally believ'd that they are bound either to Long Island or Virginia; the other transports are taking in water and a good deal of bisquet is baking, some say for the shipping to lay in Nantasket Road, to be out of the way of ice, whilst others think a more important move is in agitation; all, however, is conjecture. I heartily wish you, Mrs. Reed and family, the complts of the season, in which the ladies here and family join; be assured that I am, with sincere affect<sup>n</sup> and regard,*

## VIII.

CAMBRIDGE, 14th Jany 1776.

DEAR SIR

The bearer presents an opportunity to me of acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 30th ult. (which never came to my hands till last night,) and if I have not done it before, of your other<sup>114</sup> of the 23d preceding.

<sup>114</sup> S. "letter."

The hints you have communicated from time to time, not only deserve, but do most sincerely and cordially meet with

my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor in my estimation give<sup>115</sup> a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself, or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors; the man who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others must do this, because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove<sup>116</sup> prejudices which are imbibed against him; for this reason, I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for as I have but one capitol object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind as far as I can consistently. I mean without departing from that great line of duty, which, though hid under a cloud for some time from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny. My constant attention to the great and perplexing objects which continually rise to my view, absorbs all lesser considerations, and indeed, scarcely allows me *time*<sup>117</sup> to reflect that there is such a body in existence as the General Court of this Colony, but when I am reminded of it by a Com-

<sup>115</sup> S. "*me.*"

<sup>116</sup> S. "*the.*"

<sup>117</sup> S. "*time*" omitted.

mittee; nor can I upon recollection, discover in what instances, (I wish they would be more explicit,) I have been inattentive to, or slighted them. They could not surely conceive that there was a propriety in unbosoming the secrets of an army to them; that it was necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up an intrenchment,<sup>118</sup> forming a battalion, &c. &c. : it must therefore be what I before hinted to you, and how to remedy it I hardly know, as I am acquainted with few of the members, never go out of my own Lines, or<sup>119</sup> see any of them in them.

<sup>118</sup> S. "or."

<sup>119</sup> S. "nor."

I am exceeding<sup>120</sup> sorry to hear that your little fleet has been shut in by the frost. I hope it has sailed e'er this, and given you some proof of the utility of it, and enabl'd the Congress to bestow a little more attention to the affairs of this army, which suffers exceedingly by their overmuch business,—or too little attention to it.—We are now without any money in our treasury, powder in our magazines,<sup>121</sup> arms in our stores. We are without a brigadier (the want of *which*<sup>122</sup> has been twenty times urged) engineers, expresses, (though a committee has been appointed these two months to establish

<sup>120</sup> S. "exceedingly."

<sup>121</sup> S. "or."

<sup>122</sup> S. "whom."

them,) and by and by, when we shall be called upon to take the field, shall not have a tent to lay in,—apropos, what is doing with mine?

These are evils but small in comparison of those which disturb my present repose; our inlistments are at a stand; the fears I ever entertained are realiz'd; that is, the discontented officers<sup>123</sup> (for I do not know how else to acct for it) have thrown such difficulties or stumbling-blocks in the way of recruiting, that I no longer entertain a hope of compleating the army by voluntary inlistments, and I see no move or likelihood *of one*,<sup>124</sup> to do it by other means. In the two last weeks we have inlisted *but* abt 1000 men, whereas, I was confidently *bid*<sup>125</sup> to believe, by all the officers I conversed with, that we should by this time have had the regiments nearly compleated. Our total number upon paper amounts to abt 10,500; but as a large portion of these are return'd <sup>126</sup>not join'd, I never expect to receive them; as an ineffectual order has once issued to call them in, another 'is now gone forth, peremptorily requiring all officers, under pain of being cashier'd, and recruits *as*<sup>127</sup> being treated as deserters, to join their re-

<sup>123</sup> S. "*discontented officers*"  
Italicized by Mr. Sparks.

<sup>124</sup> S. "of one" omitted.

<sup>125</sup> S. "led," and so by me.

<sup>126</sup> S. "not joined" Italicized.

<sup>127</sup> S. "of."



spective regiments by the first day of next month, that I may know my real strength; but if my fears are not imaginary, I shall have a dreadful acct of the advanc'd month's pay. In consequence of the assurances given and my expectation of having at least men enough Inlisted to defend our lines, to which may be added my unwillingness of<sup>128</sup> burthening the cause with unnecessary expence, no relief of militia has been order'd in to supply the places of those who are releas'd from their ingagement to-morrow, and on<sup>129</sup> whom (tho' many have promised to continue out the month) there is no security of their stay.

<sup>128</sup> S. "to burthen."

<sup>129</sup> S. "as to."

Thus am I situated with respect to men,—with regard to arms, I am yet worse of:—before the dissolution of the old army, I issued an order directing three judicious men of each brigade to attend, review, and appraise the good arms of every regiment—and finding a very great unwillingness in the men to part with their arms, at the same time not having it in my power to pay them for the months of Nov<sup>r</sup> and Dec<sup>r</sup>, I threat'ned severely, that every soldier who carried<sup>130</sup> away his firelock without leave, should never receive pay for those months;—yet so

<sup>130</sup> S. "should carry."

many have been carried off, partly by stealth, but chiefly as condemned, that we have not at this time 100 guns in the stores, of all that have been taken in the prize-ship and from the soldiery, notwithstanding our regiments are not half compleat:—at the same time I am told, and believe it, that to restrain the enlistment to men with arms, you will get but few of the former, and still fewer of the latter which would be good for anything. How to get furnished, I know not—I have applied to this and the neighbouring colonies, but with what success, time only can tell. The reflection upon my situation and that of this army, produces many an *uneasy*<sup>131</sup> hour, when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts—fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these Lines, from what causes<sup>132</sup> it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting *of*<sup>133</sup> a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket upon my shoulder, and entered the ranks;—or if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and

<sup>131</sup> S. “unhappy.”

<sup>132</sup> S. “cause,” and so by me.

<sup>133</sup> S. “of” omitted.

lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these, and many other difficulties which might be innumeraled, I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemys;—for surely, if we get well throu this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labour under.

Could I have foreseen the difficulties which have come upon us—could I have known that such a backwardness would have been discovered *in*<sup>134</sup> the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say,—but this much, I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes—but as this letter discloses some Interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy till I hear it gets to your hand, although the conveyance is thought safe.

<sup>134</sup> S. “among.”

We made a successful attempt, a few nights ago, upon the houses near Bunker’s Hill; a party under Maj<sup>r</sup> Knowlton crossed upon the mill-damn (the night being dark), and set fire to and burnt down Eight out of 14 which

were standing, and which we found they were daily pulling down for fuel—five soldiers and the wife of one of them inhabiting one of the houses were brought of prisoners; another soldier was killed; none of ours hurt.

Having undoubted information of the Imbarkation of troops (somewhere from three to 500) at Boston, and being convinced that they were designed either for<sup>135</sup> New York Government (from whence we have some very disagreeable acct<sup>s</sup> of the conduct of the Tories) or Virginia, I dispatched Gen<sup>l</sup> Lee a few days ago in order to secure the city of New York from falling into their hands, as the consequences of such a blow might prove fatal to our interests. He is also to inquire a little into the conduct of the Long Islanders, and such others as have by their conduct and declarations proved themselves Inimical to the common cause. To effect these purposes, he is to raise Volunteers in Connecticut, and call upon the troops of New Jersey, if not contrary to any order of Congress.

<sup>135</sup> S. "the."

By a ship just arrived at Portsmouth, (New Hampshire) we have London prints to the 2d of Nov<sup>r</sup>, containing the ad-

dresses of Parliament, which .  
*contain*<sup>136</sup> little more than a re-  
 petition of the speech, with as-  
 surances of standing by his Ma-  
 jesty with lives and fortunes.  
 The Capt<sup>ns</sup> (for there were three  
 or four of them passengers) say  
 that we have nothing to expect  
 but the most vigorous exertions  
 of administration, who have a  
 dead majority upon all questions,  
 although the Duke of Grafton  
 and General Conway have joined  
 the minority, as also the Bishop  
 of Peterborough. These cap-  
 tains affirm confidently that the  
 5 regiments from Ireland cannot  
 any of them have arrived at  
 Hallifax, inasmuch as *that*<sup>137</sup> by  
 a violent storm on the 19th of  
 October, the transports were  
 forced (in a very *distressful*<sup>138</sup>  
 condition) into Milford Haven  
 (*Wales*),<sup>139</sup> and were not in a con-  
 dition to put to sea when they  
 left London, and that the wea-  
 ther has been such since, as to  
 prevent heavy-loaded ships from  
 making a passage by this time.  
 One or two transports, they add,  
 were thought to be lost; but  
 these arrived some considerable  
 time ago at Boston, with 3 com-  
 panies of the 17th regiment.

<sup>136</sup> S. "are."

<sup>137</sup> S. "that" omitted.

<sup>138</sup> S. "distressed."

<sup>139</sup> S. "Wales" omitted.

Mr. Sayre has been committed  
 to the Tower, upon the informa-  
 tion of a certain Lieutnt or Ad-  
 jutant Richardson (formerly of

y<sup>r</sup> city) for treasonable practices—an intention of seizeing his Majesty, and possessing himself of the Tower, it is said in the crisis,—but is admitted to bail himself in £500, and two suretys in £250 each. What are the conjectures of the wise ones with you, of<sup>140</sup> the French armament in the West Indies? But previous to this, is there any certainty of such an armament? The captains, who are sensible men, heard nothing of this when they left England—nor does there appear any apprehensions on this score in any of the measures or speeches of administration. I should think the Congress will not—ought not to adjourn at this important crisis; but it is highly necessary, when I am at the end of a<sup>141</sup> second sheet of paper, that I should adjourn my acct of matters to another letter. I shall, therefore, in Mrs. Washington's name, thank you for y<sup>r</sup> good wishes towards her, and with *her*<sup>142</sup> compliments added to mine to Mrs. Reed, &c., conclude, d<sup>r</sup> sir, y<sup>r</sup> sincere and affect<sup>e</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>,

<sup>140</sup> S. "as to."

<sup>141</sup> S. "the."

<sup>142</sup> S. "her" omitted.

## IX.

CAMBRIDGE, 23d Jan. 1776.

DEAR SIR

Real necessity compells me to ask you whether I may entertain any hopes of your returning to my family? If you can make it convenient, and will hint the matter to Col. Harrison, I dare venture to say that Congress will make it agreeable to you in every shape they can. My business increases very fast, and my distresses for want of you *along*<sup>143</sup> with it. Mr. Harrison is the only gentleman of my family that can afford me the least assistance in writing. He and Mr. Moylan, whose time must now be solely employed in his department of commissary, have heretofore afforded me their aid, and I have hinted to them, in consequence of what you signified in some former letter, that each (as they have really had a great deal of trouble), should receive one-third of your pay, reserving the other third, contrary to your desire, for yourself:—my distress and embarrassments are in a way of being very considerably increased by an occurrence in Virginia, which will, I fear, compel Mr. Harrison to leave me, or suffer considerably by his stay. He has

<sup>143</sup> S. "*increase with it.*"

wrote,<sup>144</sup> however, by the last post, to see<sup>145</sup> if his return cannot be dispensed with. If he should go, I shall really be distressed beyond measure, as I know no persons able to supply your places (in this part of the world) with whom I would chuse to live in unbounded confidence.

<sup>146</sup>*In short, for want of an acquaintance with the people hitherto, I know of none which appear to me qualified for the office of Secretary.*

The business, as I hinted to you before, is considerably increased by being more comprehensive, and at this time (<sup>147</sup>from the great changes which have and are happening every day) perplexed; so that you would want a good writer and a methodical man, as an assistant, or copying clerk;—such an one I have no doubt will be allowed, and the choice I leave to yourself, as he should be a person in whose integrity you can confide, and on whose capacity, care, and method, you can rely. At present, my time is so much taken up at my desk, that I am obliged to neglect many other essential parts of my duty:—it is absolutely necessary, therefore, *for me*<sup>148</sup> to have persons that can think for me, as well as execute orders. <sup>149</sup>*This it is*

<sup>144</sup> S. "written."

<sup>145</sup> S. "ascertain."

<sup>146</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>147</sup> S. Transposed.

<sup>148</sup> S. "for me" omitted.

<sup>149</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.



*that pains me when I think of Mr. White's expectation of coming into my family if an opening happens. I can derive no earthly assistance from such a man, and my friend Baylor is much such another, although as good and as obliging a person as any in the world. As it may be necessary that the pay of the under Secretary should be fixed, that you may, if you incline to return and should engage one, know what to promise him, I have wrote<sup>150</sup> to Col. Harrison and Mr. Lynch on this subject.*

*<sup>151</sup>The interruption of the post has prevented the receipt of any letters from the southward since this day week, so that we have but little knowledge of what is passing in that quarter. The unfortunate repulse of our troops at Quebec—the death of the brave and much to be lamented Gen<sup>l</sup> Montgomerie, and wounding of Col. Arnold, will, I fear, give a very unfavourable turn to our affairs in that quarter, as I have no opinion at all of W—r's enterprising genius.*

*Immediately upon the receipt of the unfortunate intelligence, and General Schuyler's intimation of his having no other dependance than upon me for men, I address'd Massachusetts, Connecticut, and N. Hampshire, (in*

<sup>150</sup> S. "written."

<sup>151</sup> S. The rest of the letter in Italics omitted.

*behalf of the Continent) for a regiment each, to be marched forthwith into Canada, and there continued, if need be, till the 1st of Jan'y, upon the same establishment of those raising for these Lines. It was impossible to spare a man from hence, as we want Eight or Nine thousand of our Establishment, and are obliged to depend upon militia for the defence of our works: equally improper did it appear to me to wait (situated as our affairs were) for a requisition from Congress, after several days' debate, perhaps, when in the meanwhile all might be lost: —the urgency of the case, therefore, must appologize to Congress for my adoption of this measure. Governor Trumbull, indeed, anticipated my request, for he and his Council of Safety had voted a regiment before my request had reached him. The Gent<sup>l</sup> Court here have also voted another, and I have no doubt of New Hampshire's doing the like, and that the whole will soon be on their march. I have this instant received a letter from New Hampshire, in answer to mine, informing me that they have fully complied with my request of a regiment, appointed the field-officers, and will have the whole in motion as soon as possible.*

*Colonel Warner, and others, we are told, are already on their march, so that it is to be hoped, if these bodies have but a good head, our affairs may still be retrieved in Canada before the King's troops can get reinforced.*

*They are pulling down the houses in Boston as fast as possible, and we have lately acct<sup>s</sup> from thence which it is said may be relied on, that General Clinton is actually sailed from thence with a detachment (no accounts making it more than 500) for the Southward, some say Virginia, others New York, but all is conjecture. Whether this is the fleet that has been making up for some time at Nantasket, or another, I cannot with certainty say. In my last, I informed you, I think of the expedition I had sent General Lee on to New York. Should Clinton steer his course thither, I hope he will meet with a formidable and proper reception. I shall conclude with informing you, that we should have had a formidable work on Litchmore's Point long ago, if it had not been for the frost, and that if Congress mean that we should do anything this winter, no time must be lost in forwarding powder. I have ordered in militia to take advantage of circum-*

*stances, but I see no appearance as yet of a bridge. I am with the greatest truth and sincerity,*

Dear Sir,  
Yours affectionately,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## X.

CAMBRIDGE, 31st of Jan.

MY DEAR SIR,

In my last (<sup>153</sup>*date not recollected*) by Mr. John Adams, I communicated my distresses to you, on account of my want of your assistance. *Since this,*<sup>153</sup> I have been under some concern at *doing of it,*<sup>154</sup> lest it should precipitate your return before you *were ripe*<sup>155</sup> for it, or bring on a final resignation, which I am unwilling to think of, if your return can be made convenient and agreeable. True it is, that from a variety of causes, my business has been, and now is, multiplied and perplexed, whilst the means of execution *is*<sup>156</sup> greatly contracted. This may be a cause for my wishing you here, but no inducement to your coming, if you hesitated before.

I have now to thank you for your favors <sup>157</sup>*of the 15th, 16th, and 20th inst.,* and for the several articles of intelligence which they convey. The account given

<sup>153</sup> S. "date not recollected" omitted.

<sup>153</sup> S. "I have been since."

<sup>154</sup> S. "having done it."

<sup>155</sup> S. "are ready."

<sup>156</sup> S. "are."

<sup>157</sup> S. Omitted.

of your Navy, at the same time that it is exceedingly unfavourable to our wishes, is a little provoking to me, inasmuch as it has deprived us of <sup>158</sup> a necessary *article* which otherwise would have been sent hither, but which a kind of fatality, I fear, will forever deprive us of. In the instance of New York, we are not to receive a particle of what you expected would be sent from thence—the time and season is passing away, as I believe the troops in Boston also\* will, before the season for taking the field arrives. I dare say, they are preparing for it now, as we have undoubted intelligence of Clinton's leaving Boston with a number of troops <sup>159</sup> (*by different accounts, from four or five hundred to 10 companies of grenadiers, and nine of light infantry*) believed to be design'd for Long Island or New York, in consequence of assurances from Governor Tryon of a powerful aid from the Tories there.

I hope my countrymen (of Virginia) will rise superior to any losses the whole Navy of Great Britain can bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk, and *threatened*<sup>160</sup> devastation of other places, will have

<sup>158</sup> S. "necessary articles."

<sup>159</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>160</sup> S. "attempted."

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\* "Also" omitted by me.

no other effect than to unite the whole country in one indissoluble *band*<sup>181</sup> *against a Nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue, and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages.\** A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet "Common Sense," will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation.

By a letter of the 21st inst. from<sup>182</sup> Wooster, I find that Arnold was continuing the blockade of Quebec the 19th, which under the heaviness of our loss there, is a most favourable circumstance, and exhibits a fresh proof of Arnold's ability and perseverance in the midst of difficulties; the reinforcement ordered to him, will, I hope, compleat the entire conquest of Canada this winter; and <sup>183</sup>*but* for the loss of the gallant chief and his brave followers, I should think the rebuff rather favour-

<sup>181</sup> S. "bond;" and the sentence in Italics omitted.

<sup>182</sup> S. "General Wooster."

<sup>183</sup> S. "except for."

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\* This sentence is stronger than any other I find in the public or private letters. It seems to me of value, as showing what the calm, deliberate, loyal Washington, the reluctant rebel against Imperial authority, at so early a date as January, 1776, thought and wrote of the Mother country and its ministers.

able than otherwise; for had the country been subdued by such a handful of men, 'tis more than probable that it would have been left to the defence of a few, and rescued from us in the Spring:—our eyes will now not only be open to the importance of holding it, but the numbers which are requisite to that end. <sup>164</sup>*In return for your two beef and poultry vessels from New York, I can acquaint you that our Commodore Manley has just taken two ships from White Haven to Boston, with coal and potatoes, and sent them into Plymouth, and fought a tender (close by the light-house where the vessels were taken), long enough to give his prizes time to get off, in short, till she thought it best to quit the combat, and he to move off from the men-of-war, which were spectators of this scene. In my last, I think I inform'd you of my sending General Lee to New York, with intention to secure the Tories of*<sup>165</sup>*Long Island, &c., and to prevent,*<sup>166</sup>*if possible, the king's troops from making a lodgment there; but I fear the Congress will be duped by the representations from that Government, or yield to them in such a manner as to become marplots to the expedition;—the city seems to*

<sup>164</sup> S. Sentences in Italics omitted.

<sup>165</sup> S. "on."

<sup>166</sup> S. "preventing."

be entirely under the government of Tryon, and the Captain of the man-of-war.

Mrs. Washington desires <sup>187</sup>I <sup>167</sup>S. "me to thank." *will thank* you for the picture sent her. Mr. Campbell, whom I never saw to my knowledge, has made a very formidable figure of the Commander-in-chief, giving him a sufficient portion of terror in his countenance. Mrs. Washington also desires her compliments to Mrs. Reed, &c., as I do, and with the sincerest regard and affection, I remain, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## XI.

CAMBRIDGE, *February 1, 1776.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I had *wrote*<sup>168</sup> the letter here-<sup>168</sup>S. "written." with enclosed, before your favour of the 21st came to hand. The account given of the behaviour of the men under General Montgomerie is exactly consonant to the opinion I have\* form'd of these people, and such as they will exhibit abundant proofs of in similar cases whenever called upon. Place them behind a parapet,—a breast-work,—stone

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\* Printed by me "had."



wall,—or any thing that will afford them shelter, and from their knowledge of a fire-lock, they will give a good account of *their*<sup>169</sup> enemy; but I am as well convinced as if I had seen it, that they will not march boldly up to a work,—or stand exposed in a plain,—and yet, if we are furnished with the means, and the weather will afford us a passage and we can get in men, (for these three things are necessary) something must be attempted. The men must be brought to face danger; they cannot allways have an Intrenchment or a stone wall as a safeguard or shield, and it is of essential importance that the troops in Boston should be destroyed if possible, before they can be reinforced or remove.—This is clearly my opinion,—whether circumstances will admit of the tryal, and if tryed, what will be the *event*,<sup>170</sup> the all-wise Disposer of *them*<sup>171</sup> alone can tell.

<sup>172</sup> *The evils arising from short, or even any limited Inlistment of the troops, are greater, and more extensively hurtful than any person (not an eye-witness to them,) can form any idea of. It takes you two or three months to bring new men in any tolerable degree acquainted with their duty; it takes a longer time to bring a*

<sup>169</sup> S. "the."

<sup>170</sup> S. "result."

<sup>171</sup> S. "events."

<sup>172</sup> S. The rest of this letter in Italics omitted.

*people of the temper and genius of these into such a subordinate way of thinking as is necessary for a soldier;—before this is accomplished, the time approaches for their dismissal, and you are beginning to make interest with them for their continuance for another limited period; in the doing of which you are oblig'd to relax in your discipline, in order as it were to curry favour with them, by which means the latter part of your time is employ'd in undoing what the first was accomplishing, and instead of having men always ready to take advantage of circumstances, you must govern your movements by the circumstances of your Inlistment. This is not all; by the time you have got men arm'd and equip'd, the difficulty of doing which is beyond description, and with every new sett you have the same trouble to encounter, without the means of doing it.—In short, the disadvantages are so great and apparent to me, that I am convinced, uncertain as the continuance of the war is, that the Congress had better determine to give a bounty of 20, 30, or even 40 Dollars to every man who will Inlist for the whole time, be it long or short. I intend to write my sentiments fully*

*on this subject to Congress the first leisure time I have.*

*I am exceedingly sorry to hear that Arnold's wound is in an unfavourable way; his letter to me of the 14th ult. says nothing of this. I fancy Congress have given some\* particular direction respecting Genl Prescot. I think they ought for more reasons than one.*

*I am sincerely and affectionately, your most obedient servant,*  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

*Be so good as to send the enclosed letter of Randolph's to the Post-Office.*

## XII.

CAMBRIDGE, Febr 10, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR

<sup>173</sup> *Your obliging favours of the 28th ult. and 1st inst. are now before me, and claim my particular thanks for the polite attention you pay to my wishes in an early and regular communication of what is passing in your quarter.*

<sup>173</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

If, my dear sir, you conceive that I took anything wrong or amiss that was conveyed in any of your former letters, you are really mistaken; I only meant

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\* "Some" omitted by me.

to convince you that nothing would give me more real satisfaction than to know the sentiments which are entertained of me by the publick, whether they be favourable or otherwise ; and urged as a reason, that the man who wished to steer clear of shelves and rocks, must know where they lay. I know—but *to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity*<sup>174</sup>—the integrity of my own heart. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in. I know that much is expected of me. I know that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without any thing fit for the accommodation of a soldier, that little is to be done, —and, *which*<sup>175</sup> is mortifying, I know that I cannot stand justified to the world, without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with y<sup>m</sup>. If, under these disadvantages, I am able to keep above water, (*as it were*)<sup>176</sup> in the esteem of mankind, I shall feel myself happy ; but if, from the unknown peculiarity of my circumstances, I suffer in the opinion of the world, I shall not think you take the freedom of a friend, if

<sup>174</sup> S. Transposed.

<sup>175</sup> S. “what.”

<sup>176</sup> S. “as it were” omitted.

you conceal the reflections that may be cast upon my conduct. My own situation *feels*<sup>177</sup> so irksome to me at times, that if I did not consult the publick good more than my own tranquility I should long e're this have put every thing *to*<sup>178</sup> the cast of a Dye. So far from my having an army of 20,000 men, well armed, &c., I have been here with less than one-half of *it*,<sup>179</sup> including sick, furloughed, and on command; and those neither armed or cloathed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such that I have been oblig'd to use art to conceal it from my own officers.

<sup>177</sup> S. "is."

<sup>178</sup> S. "on."

<sup>179</sup> S. "that number."

<sup>180</sup> *The Congress, as you observe, expect, I believe, that I should do more than others,—for whilst they compel me to Inlist men without a bounty, they give 40 to others, which will, I expect, put a stand to our Inlistments; for notwithstanding all the publick virtue which is ascrib'd to these people, there is no Nation under the sun, (that I ever came across) pay greater adoration to money than they do—I am pleas'd to find that your Battalions are cloathed and look well, and that they are filing of for Canada—I wish I could say that the troops here had altered much in Dress or appearance.*

<sup>180</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted

*Our regiments are little more than half compleat, and recruiting nearly at a stand—In all my letters I fail not to mention of Tents, and now perceive that notice is taken of yr application. I have been convinced, by General Howe's conduct, that he has either been very ignorant of our situation (which I do not believe,) or that he has received positive orders (which, I think, is natural to conclude) not to put anything to the hazard till his reinforcements arrive;—otherwise there has been a time since the first of December, that we must have fought like men to have maintained these Lines, so great in their extent. The party to Bunker's Hill<sup>181</sup> had some good and some bad men engaged in it. One or two Courts have been held on the conduct of part of <sup>182</sup>it:—to be plain, these people —<sup>183</sup>among friends—are not to be depended upon, if exposed; and any man will fight well, if he thinks himself in no danger—I do not apply this to these people—I suppose it to be the case with all raw and undisciplined troops.*

You may rely upon it, that transports left Boston six weeks ago with troops; where they are gone to (unless drove\* to the

<sup>181</sup> S. "sent to Bunker's Hill."

<sup>182</sup> S. "them."

<sup>183</sup> S. "among friends" omitted.

West Indies) I know not. You may also rely upon General Clinton's sailing from Boston about 3 weeks ago, with about four or five hundred men—his destination I am also a stranger to. I am sorry to hear of the failures you speak of from France; but why will not Congress forward part of the powder made in your province? They seem to look upon this as the season for action, but will not furnish the means,—But I will not blame them—I dare say the demands upon them are greater than they can supply. The cause must be starved till our resources are greater, or more certain within ourselves.

With respect to myself, I have never entertained an Idea of an accommodation since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight. The King's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair,—and if every man was of my mind, the ministers of G. B. should know in a few words upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations or specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly

terms, proclaim our wrongs and our resolutions to be redressed. I would tell them that we had born much—that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honourable terms—that it had been denied us—that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented—that we had done everything that could be expected from the best of subjects—that the spirit of freedom *beat*<sup>184</sup> too high in us to submit to slavery—and that if nothing else would satisfy a Tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we were determined to shake of all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness.

<sup>184</sup> S. “rises.”

I observe what you say in respect to the ardour of chimney-corner Heros. I am glad their zeal is in some measure abated, because if circumstances will not permit us to make an attempt upon B——, or if it should be made and fail, we shall not appear altogether so culpable. I entertain the same opinion of the attempt now which I have ever done—I believe an assault will be attended with considerable loss,—and I



believe it would succeed, if the men should behave well; without it, unless there is equal bad behaviour on the other side we cannot. As to an attack upon B—— Hill (unless it could be carried by surprize) the loss I conceive would be greater in proportion than at Boston; and if a defeat should follow, would be discouraging to the men, but highly animating if crown'd with success—Great good or great evil would consequently result from it,—<sup>185</sup>*it is quite a different thing to what you left, being by odds the strongest fortress they possess, both in rear and front.*

<sup>185</sup> S. Sentence in Italics omitted.

The Congress having ordered all captures to be tried in the Courts of Admiralty of the different governments to which they are sent, and some irreconcilable difference arising between the resolves of Congress, and the law of this Colony respecting the proceedings or something *or another*<sup>186</sup> which always happens to procrastinate business here, has put a total stop to the tryals, to the no small injury of the publick as well as great grievance of individuals. Whenever a condemnation shall take place, I shall not be unmindful of your advice respecting the hulls, &c. Would to Heaven the plan you

<sup>186</sup> S. "or another" omitted.

speak of for obtaining arms may  
 succeed—the acquisition would  
 be great, and give fresh life and  
 vigour to our measures, <sup>187</sup>*as*  
*would the arrival you speak of;*  
 our expectations are kept alive,  
 and if we can keep ourselves so,  
 and <sup>188</sup>spirits up another sum-  
 mer, I have no fears of wanting  
 the needful after that.

<sup>187</sup> S. Omitted.

<sup>188</sup> S. “*our*” inserted.

<sup>189</sup>*As the number of our In-*  
*listed men were too small to un-*  
*dertake any offensive operation,*  
*if the circumstances of weather,*  
*&c. should favour, I ordered in*  
*(by application to this Govt,*  
*Connecticut and New Hamp-*  
*shire) as many regiments of*  
*militia as would enable us to*  
*attempt something in some man-*  
*ner or other—they were to have*  
*been here by the first of the month,*  
*but only a few straggling compa-*  
*nies are yet come in. The Bay*  
*towards Roxbury has been froze*  
*up once or twice pretty hard, and*  
*yesterday single persons might*  
*have crossed, I believe, from*  
*Litchmore’s Point, by picking*  
*his way:—a thaw, I fear, is*  
*again approaching. We have*  
 had the most laborious piece of  
 work at Litchmore’s Point, on  
 acct of the frost, that ever you  
 saw. We hope to get it finished  
 on Sunday. It is within as com-  
 manding a distance of Boston  
 as Dorchester Hill, though of a

<sup>189</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

different part—Our vessels now and then pick up a prize or two. Our Commodore (Manley) was very near being caught about 8 days ago, but happily escaped with<sup>190</sup> vessel and crew, after running<sup>191</sup> ashore, scuttling, and defending her. I recollect nothing else worth giving you the trouble of, unless you can be amused by reading a letter and poem addressed to me by *Mrs.* or<sup>192</sup> Miss Phillis Wheatley. In searching over a parcel of papers the other day, in order to destroy such as were useless, I brought it to light again:—at first with a view of doing justice to her *great*<sup>193</sup> poetical genius, I had a great mind to publish the poem, but not knowing whether it might not be considered rather as a mark of my own vanity than as a compliment to her, I laid it aside, till I came across it again in the manner just mentioned. I congratulate you on your election, although I consider it the coup-de-grace to my expectation of ever seeing you resident *in this camp again*.<sup>194</sup> I have only to regret the want of you, if that should be the case, and I shall do it more feelingly as I have experienced the good effects of your aid.—I am, with Mrs. Washington's compliments to

<sup>190</sup> S. "his vessels."

<sup>191</sup> S. "the former ashore."

<sup>192</sup> S. "Mrs. or" omitted.

<sup>193</sup> S. "great" omitted.

<sup>194</sup> S. "with me, this campaign."

Mrs. Reed, and my best respects  
*added*,<sup>195</sup> dear sir,

<sup>195</sup> S. "added" omitted.

Your most obedient and affectionate humble servant,  
 G. W.

### XIII.

CAMBRIDGE, *February 26th*, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

<sup>196</sup> *A line or two from you by Colonel Bull, which came to hand last evening, is the only letter I have received from you since the 21st January—this added to my getting none from any other correspondent southward, leads me to apprehend some miscarriage. I am to observe, though, that the Saturday's post is not yet arrived,—by that I may possibly get letters.*

<sup>196</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

We have, under *as*<sup>197</sup> many difficulties, perhaps, (on account of hard frozen ground,) *as ever working parties engaged*, completed our work on Litchmore's Point; we have got some heavy pieces of ordinance placed there, two platforms fixed for mortars, and every thing *but the thing*<sup>198</sup> ready for any offensive operation. Strong guards are now mounted there, and at Cobble Hill. About ten days ago, the severe freezing weather formed some pretty strong ice from Dorches-

<sup>197</sup> S. "We have, under many difficulties, on account of hard frozen ground, completed our work on Litchmore's Point."

<sup>198</sup> S. "but the thing" omitted.

ter to Boston Neck, and from Roxbury to the Common. This I thought (knowing the ice could not last) a favourable opportunity to make an assault upon the troops in town. I proposed it in council; but behold! though we had been waiting all the year for this favourable event, the enterprise was thought too dangerous! Perhaps it was—perhaps the irksomeness of my situation led me to undertake more than could be warranted by prudence. I did not think so, and am sure yet that the enterprise, if it had been undertaken with resolution, must have succeeded; without it, any would fail; but it is now at an end, and I am preparing to take post on Dorchester<sup>199</sup> to try if the enemy will be so kind as to come out to us. Ten regiments of militia, you must know, had come in to strengthen my hands for offensive measures; but what I have *here*<sup>200</sup> said respecting the determinations in council, and possessing of Dorchester Point, is spoken under the rose.

<sup>199</sup> S. "Heights."

<sup>200</sup> S. "here" omitted.

March 3d, 1776.

<sup>201</sup> *The foregoing was intended for another conveyance, but being hurried with some other matters, and not able to complete it, it was delayed; since which your*

<sup>201</sup> S. Omitted.

favours of the 28th January, and 1st and 8th of February, are come to hand. For the agreeable account contained in one of them of your progress in the manufacture of powder, and prospect of getting arms, I am obliged to you, as there is some consolation in knowing that these useful articles will supply the wants of some part of the Continental troops, although I feel too sensibly the mortification of having them withheld from me—Congress not even thinking it necessary to take the least notice of my application for these things.

I hope in a few nights to be in readiness to take post on *Dorchester*,<sup>202</sup> as we are using every means in our power to provide materials for this purpose, the ground being so hard *froze*<sup>203</sup> yet, that we cannot intrench, and therefore are obliged to depend entirely upon chandeliers, fascines, and screwed hay for our redoubts. It is expected that this work will bring on an action between the King's troops and ours.

General Lee's expedition to New York was founded upon indubitable evidence of General Clinton's being on the point of sailing—no place<sup>204</sup> so likely for his destination as New York,

<sup>202</sup> S. "Point."

<sup>203</sup> S. "frozen."

<sup>204</sup> S. "was so likely."

*nor*<sup>205</sup> no place where a more capitol blow could be given to the interests of America <sup>206</sup>*than there*. Common prudence, therefore, dictated the necessity of preventing an evil which might have proved irremediable, had it happened, but I confess to you honestly, I had no idea of running the Continent to the expense which was incurr'd, or that such a body of troops would go from Connecticut as did, or be raised upon the terms they were. You must know, my good sir, that a Capt. Sears was here, with some other gentlemen of Connecticut, when the intelligence of Clinton's imbarkation (at least the imbarkation of the troops) came to hand. The situation of these lines would not afford a detachment—New York could not be depended upon,—and of the troops in Jersey we had no certain information, either *of*<sup>207</sup> their numbers or destination. What then was to be done? Why, Sears and these other gentlemen assured me, that if the necessity of the case was signified by me, and that General Lee should be sent, one thousand volunteers (requiring no pay, but) supplied with provisions only would march immediately to New York, and defend the place till Congress

<sup>205</sup> S. "and."

<sup>206</sup> S. "than there" omitted.

<sup>207</sup> S. "as to."

could determine what should be done, and that a line from me to Governor Trumbull, to obtain his sanction, would facilitate the measure. This I accordingly wrote, in precise terms, intending that these volunteers, and such of the Jersey regiments as could be speedily assembled, should be thrown into the city for its defence, and for disarming the Tories upon Long Island, who, I understood, had become extremely insolent and daring, when behold! instead of volunteers consisting of gentlemen without pay, the Governor directed men to be voluntarily enlisted for this service, upon Continental pay and allowance. This, you will observe, was contrary to my expectation and plan. Yet as I thought it a matter of the last importance to secure the *command*<sup>208</sup> of the North River, I did not *think*<sup>209</sup> it expedient to countermand the raising of the Connt regiments on account of the pay; if I have done wrong, those members of Congress who think the matter ought to have been left to them, must consider my proceedings as an error of judgment, and that a measure is not always to be judged *of*<sup>210</sup> by the event. It is moreover worthy of consideration that in cases of ex-

<sup>208</sup> S. "communication."

<sup>209</sup> S. "deem."

<sup>210</sup> S. "of" omitted.



treme necessity (*as*<sup>211</sup> the present) nothing but decision can insure success, and certain I am that Clinton had something more in view by peeping into New York than to gratify his curiosity, or make a friendly visit to his friend Mr. Tryon,—however, I am not fond of stretching my powers; and if the Congress will say “thus far and no farther you shall go,” I will promise not to offend whilst I continue in their service. I observe what you say in respect to my wagon, &c. I wanted nothing more than a light travelling wagon (such as those of New Jersey) with a secure cover which might be under lock and key, the hinges being on one side, the lock on the other. I have no copy of the memorandum of the articles I desired you to provide for me, but think one and a half dozen of campstools, a folding table, *rather* *two*,<sup>212</sup> plates and dishes, were among them; what I meant therefore, was that the bed of *this*<sup>213</sup> wagon should be constructed in such a manner as to stow these things to the best advantage. If you cannot get them with you, I shall despair of providing them here, as workmen are scarce and most exorbitantly high in their charges.

<sup>211</sup> S. “like.”

<sup>212</sup> S. Omitted.

<sup>213</sup> S. “the.”

What I should aim at is, when the wagon and things are ready (which ought to be very soon, as I do not know how soon we may beat a march) to buy a pair of clever horses, same colour, hire a careful driver, and let the whole come off at once, and then they *are*<sup>214</sup> ready for immediate service. I have no doubt *but*<sup>215</sup> that the Treasury, by application to Mr. Hancock, will direct payment thereof without any kind of difficulty, as Congress must be sensible that I cannot take the field without equipage, and after I have once got into a tent, I shall not soon quit it.

<sup>214</sup> S. "will be."

<sup>215</sup> S. "but" omitted.

March 7th.

<sup>216</sup> *The Rumpus which every body expected to see between the Ministerialists in Boston and our troops, has detained the bearer till this time. On Monday night I took possession of the Heights of Dorchester with two thousand men under the command of General Thomas. Previous to this, and in order to divert the enemy's attention from the real object, and to harass, we began on Saturday night a cannonade and bombardment, which with intervals was continued through the night—the same on Sunday, and on Monday, a continued*

<sup>216</sup> S. The part in Italics omitted. See, however, the letter to Congress of same date, in which the same intelligence is communicated, though in a far more formal tone.

*roar from seven o'clock till daylight was kept up between the enemy and us. In this time we had an officer and one private killed, and four or five wounded; and through the ignorance, I suppose, of our artillerymen, burst five mortars (two thirteen inch and three ten inch) the "Congress" one of them. What damage the enemy has sustained is not known, as there has not been a creature out of Boston since. The canonade, &c., except in the destruction of the mortars, answered our expectations fully; for though we had upwards of 300 teams in motion at the same instant, carrying on our fascines, and other materials to the Neck, and the moon shining in its full lustre, we were not discovered till daylight on Tuesday morning.*

*So soon as we were discovered, every thing seemed to be preparing for an attack, but the tide failing before they were ready, about one thousand only were able to embark in six transports in the afternoon, and these falling down towards the Castle, were drove on shore by a violent storm, which arose in the afternoon of that day, and continued through the night; since that they have been seen returning to Boston, and whether from an ap-*

*prehension that our works are now too formidable to make any impression on, or from what other causes I know not, but their hostile appearances have subsided, and they are removing their ammunition out of their magazine, whether with a view to move bag and baggage or not I cannot undertake to say, but if we had powder, (and our mortars replaced, which I am about to do by new cast ones as soon as possible) I would, so soon as we were sufficiently strengthened on the heights to take possession of the point just opposite to Boston Neck, give them a dose they would not well like.*

*We had prepared boats, a detachment of 4000 men, &c., &c., for pushing to the west part of Boston, if they had made any formidable attack upon Dorchester. <sup>217</sup>I will not lament or repine at any act of Providence because I am in a great measure, a convert to Mr. Pope's opinion, that whatever is, is right, but <sup>218</sup>I think everything had the appearance of a successful issue, if we had come to an engagement on that day. It was the 5th of March, which I recalled to their remembrance as a day never to be forgotten; an engagement was fully expected, and I never saw*

<sup>217</sup> S. To the end of this paragraph is given in a note, vol. iii. p. 306.

<sup>218</sup> "and I think."

*spirits higher, or more ardour prevailing.*

Your favour of the 18th ulto. came to my hands by post last night, and gives me much pleasure, as I am led to hope I shall see you *of*<sup>219</sup> my family again: the terms upon which you come will be perfectly agreeable to me, and I should think you neither candid nor friendly if your communications on this subject had not been free, unreserved, and divested of that false <sup>220</sup>*kind of* modesty which too often prevents the elucidation of points important to be known.

<sup>219</sup> S. "in."

<sup>220</sup> S. "kind of" omitted.

Mr. Baylor, seeming to have an inclination to go into the artillery, and Col. Knox<sup>221</sup> *desirous* of it, I have appointed Mr. Moylan and Mr. Palfrey my aid-de-camp, so that I shall, if you come, have a good many writers about me. I think my countrymen made a capitol mistake when they took Henry out of the Senate to place him in the field, and pity it is he does not see this, and remove every difficulty by a voluntary resignation. I am of opinion that Colonel Armstrong (if he retains his health, spirits, and vigour) will be as fit a person as any they could send to Virginia, as he is senior officer to any now there, and I should

<sup>221</sup> S. "being desirous."

think could give no offence ; but to place Colonel Thompson there in the first command, would throw every thing into the utmost confusion, for it was by mere chance he became a colonel upon this expedition, and by greater chance he became first colonel, in this army ; to take him then from another colony, place him over the heads of several gentlemen under, or with whom, he has served in a *low and*<sup>222</sup> subordinate character, would never answer any other purpose but that of introducing endless confusion,—such a thing surely cannot be in contemplation, and knowing the mischiefs it would produce, surely Colonel Thompson would have more sense and a greater regard for the cause he is engaged in, than to accept of it ; unless some uncommon abilities or exertions had given him a superior claim. He must know that nothing more than being a captain of horse in the year 1759 (I think it was,) did very extraordinarily give him the start he now has, when the rank was settled here : —at the same time he must know another fact, that several officers now in the Virginia service, were much his superiors in point of rank, and will not, I am sure, serve under him. He

<sup>222</sup> S. “low and” omitted.

stands first Colonel here, and may, I presume, put in a very good and proper claim to the first brigade that falls vacant. But I hope more regard will be paid to the service than to send him to Virginia. The bringing of Colonel Armstrong into this army as Major-General, however great his merit, would introduce much confusion. Thomas, if no more, would surely quit, and I believe him to be a good man. If Thomas supplies the place of Lee, there will be a vacancy for either Armstrong or Thompson, for I have heard of no other valiant son of New England waiting promotion since the advancement of Fry, who has not, and I doubt will not do much service to the cause; <sup>223</sup>*at present he keeps his room, and talks learnedly of emetics, cathartics, &c. For my own part, I see nothing but a declining life that matters him.* I am sorry to hear of your ill-fated fleet. We had it, I suppose, because we wished it, that Hopkins had taken Clinton and his transports. How glorious would this have been! We have the proverb <sup>224</sup>*of* our side, however, that a bad beginning will end well:—this applies to land and sea service. The account given of the business of the Commis-

<sup>223</sup> S. Omitted.

<sup>224</sup> S. "on our side."

sioners from England seems to be of a piece with Lord North's conciliatory motion of last year, built upon the same foundation, and if true that they are to be divided among the Colonies to offer terms of pardon, is as insulting as that motion, and only designed, after stopping all intercourse with us, to set us to view in Great Britain as a people that will not hearken to any propositions of peace. Was there ever thing more absurd than to repeal the very acts which have introduced all this confusion and bloodshed, and at the same time enact a law to restrain all intercourse with the Colonies for opposing them! The drift and design is obvious; but is it possible that any sensible nation upon earth can be imposed upon by such a cobweb scheme or gauze covering\*—but enough

<sup>225</sup>*or else upon a subject so copious I should enter upon my fifth sheet of paper. I have, if length of letter will do it, already made you ample amend for the silence which my hurry in preparing for what I hoped would be a decisive stroke, obliged me to keep. My best respects to Mrs. Reed, in which Mrs. Wash-*

<sup>225</sup> S. The rest of the letter omitted.

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\* Here is one of the oversights in my book, plainly the result of accident. The words "nation upon earth can be imposed upon by such a cobweb scheme or gauze covering" are omitted by me.



*ington joins, concludes me, dear  
sir,*

Your most obedient  
affectionate servant,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

*March 9th.*

Colonel Bull still waiting to see a little further into the event of things, gives me an opportunity of adding, that from a gentleman out of Boston, confirmed by a paper from the Selectmen there, we have undoubted information of General Howe's preparing with great precipitancy to embark his troops; for what place we know not; Halifax, it is said. The Selectmen, being under dreadful apprehension for the town, applied to General Robinson to apply to General Howe, who through General Robinson has inform'd them that it is not his intention to destroy the town, unless his Majesty's troops should be molested during their embarkation, or at their departure. This paper seems so much under covert, unauthenticated, and addressed to nobody, that I sent word to them (that is the Selectmen) that I could take no notice of it; but I shall go on with my preparations as intended. The gentlemen above mentioned, out of Boston, say that they seem to be in great consternation

there, that one of our shot from Lamb's Dam disabled six men, in their beds, and that the Admiral, upon discovering our works next morning, informed the General that, unless we were dispossessed of them, he could not keep the King's ships in the harbour; and that three thousand men, commanded by Lord Percy, were actually embarked for that purpose. The issue of it you have been informed before.

Yours, &c.

G. W.

#### XIV.

CAMBRIDGE, *March 19th*, 1776.\*

MY DEAR SIR,

We have at length got the ministerial troops in this quarter on shipboard. Our possessing Dorchester Heights, as mentioned in my last, put them (after they had given over the design of attacking us) into a most violent hurry to embark, which was still further precipitated on Sunday morning by our breaking ground on Nukes' Hill, (the point nearest the town,) the night before. The whole fleet

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\* This letter is not published by Mr. Sparks. I am tempted to reprint it mainly on account of its spirited tone—much more attractive than the stateliness of Washington's style in writing to Congress.

is now in Nantasket and King's Roads, waiting for I know not what, unless to give us a parting blow, for which I shall endeavour to be prepared.

The hurry in which they have embarked is inconceivable; they have not, from a rough estimate, left less than £30,000 worth of his Majesty's property behind them, in provisions and stores, vessels, rugs, blankets, &c.; near thirty pieces of fine heavy cannon are left spiked, which we are now drilling—a mortar or two—the H. shells, &c. in abundance,—all their artillery-carts, powder-wagons, &c. &c., which they have been twelve months about, are left with such abuse as their hurry would permit them to bestow; whilst others, after a little cutting and hacking, were thrown into the harbour, and now are visiting every shore. In short, you can scarce form an idea of the matter. Valuable vessels are left with only a mast or bowsprit cut down—some of them loaded;—their works all standing, upon examination of which, especially that at Bunker's Hill, we find amazingly strong; twenty thousand men could not have carried it against one thousand, had that work been well defended. The town of Boston was almost im-

pregnable—every avenue fortified. I have already marched the riflemen and five regiments for New York; I cannot spare more, whilst the fleet hover in our harbour. So soon as they are fairly gone, more will follow with all expedition, as I shall do myself, as I suppose New York to be the object in view. I write you in much haste, and therefore can only add that I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and  
affectionate servant,  
G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I impatiently wish to see you.

## XV.

CAMBRIDGE, *March 25th*, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,

Since my last, things remain nearly in statu quo. The enemy have the best knack at puzzling people I ever met with in my life. They have blown up, burnt, and demolished the castle totally, and are now all in Nantasket Road—*have*<sup>226</sup> been there ever since Wednesday, *what doing*<sup>227</sup> the Lord knows. Various are the conjectures; the Bostonians think their stay there absolutely necessary to fit them for sea, as the vessels neither in

<sup>226</sup> S. "They have."

<sup>227</sup> S. "what they are doing."

themselves *nor loading was*<sup>228</sup> in any degree fit for a voyage, *being loaded*<sup>229</sup> in great haste and much disorder. This opinion is corroborated by a deserter from one of the transports, who says they have yards, booms, bowsprits, &c. yet to fix. Others again think that they have a mind to pass over the equinoctial gale before they put out, not being in the best condition to stand one—others that they are *waiting*<sup>230</sup> reinforcements, (which I believe *they have received*,<sup>231</sup> as I have had an account of the sailing of fifteen vessels from the West Indies, <sup>232</sup>*and that that number have been seen coming into the Road.*) But my opinion of the matter is, that they want to retrieve their disgrace before they go off, and I think a favourable opportunity presents itself to them. They have now got their whole force into one collected body, and no posts to guard. We have detached six regiments to New York, *have*<sup>233</sup> many points to look to, and on Monday next ten regiments of militia which were brought in to serve till the 1st of April, *stand*<sup>234</sup> disengaged. From former experience, we have found it *equally*<sup>235</sup> practicable to stop a torrent as these people, when their time is up; if this should be the case

<sup>228</sup> S. "nor their lading were."

<sup>229</sup> S. "having been loaded."

<sup>230</sup> S. Omitted; obviously a typographical error.

<sup>231</sup> S. "has arrived."

<sup>232</sup> S. Omitted.

<sup>233</sup> S. "and have."

<sup>234</sup> S. "will be."

<sup>235</sup> S. "as."

now, what more favourable opening can the enemy wish for, to make a *rush*<sup>236</sup> upon our lines—nay, upon the back of our lines at Roxbury? as they can land two miles from them, and pass behind. I am under more apprehension from them now than ever, and am taking every precaution I can to guard against the evil; but we have a kind of people to deal with who will not fear danger till the bayonet is at their breast, and then are susceptible enough of it. I am fortifying Fort Hill in Boston, demolishing the lines on the Neck there, (*as it is*<sup>237</sup> a defence against the country only,) and *make*<sup>238</sup> such other dispositions as appears necessary for a general defence. I can spare no more men, till I see the enemy's back fairly turned, and then shall hasten to New York. You mention Mr. Webb in one of your letters *as*<sup>239</sup> an assistant; he will be agreeable enough to me, if you think him qualified for the business. What kind of a hand he writes, I know not; I believe but a cramped one—latterly none at all, as he has either the gout or rheumatism *in*<sup>240</sup> both. He is a man fond of company, *of*<sup>241</sup> gaiety—and *of*<sup>242</sup> a tender constitution; whether, therefore, such a person would answer

<sup>236</sup> S. "a push."

<sup>237</sup> S. "as they are."

<sup>238</sup> S. "making."

<sup>239</sup> S. "for."

<sup>240</sup> S. "or."

<sup>241</sup> S. "and."

<sup>242</sup> S. "and is of."

your purpose so well as a plodding, methodical person, whose sole business should be to arrange his papers, &c. in such order as to produce any one at any instant it is called for, and capable, at the same time, of composing a letter, is what you have to consider. I can only add that I have no one in view myself, and wish you success in your choice, being with great truth and sincerity,

Dear sir, your affectionate  
servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have taken occasion to hint to a certain gentleman in this Camp, without introducing names, my apprehensions of his being concerned in trade. He protests most solemnly, that he is not, directly or indirectly,  
<sup>243</sup>*and derives no other profit than the Congress allows him for defraying the expenses, to wit, 5 per cent. on the goods purchased.*

<sup>243</sup> S. Omitted.

## XVI.

CAMBRIDGE, April 1st, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

<sup>244</sup>*By the express which I sent to Philadelphia a few days ago, I wrote you a few hasty lines; I have little time to do more now, as I am hurried in despatching*

<sup>244</sup> S. In Italics omitted.

*one brigade after another for New York, and preparing for my own departure by pointing out the duties of those that remain behind me.*

*Nothing of importance has occurred in these parts, since my last, unless it be the resignations of Generals Ward and Fry, and the reassumption of the former, or retraction, on account as he says, of its being disagreeable to some of the officers. Who those officers are, I have not heard. I have not enquired. When the application to Congress and notice of it to me came to hand, I was disarmed of interposition, because it was put upon the footing of duty, or conscience, the General being persuaded that his health would not allow him to take that share of duty that his office required. The officers to whom the resignation is disagreeable, have been able, no doubt, to convince him of his mistake, and that his health will admit him to be alert and active. I shall leave him till he can determine yea or nay, to command in this quarter. General Fry, that wonderful man, has made a most wonderful hand of it. His appointment took place the 11th January; he desired ten days ago that his resignation might take*



*place the 11th April. He has drawn three hundred and seventy-five dollars, never done one day's duty, scarce been three times out of his house, discovered that he was too old and too infirm for a moving camp, but remembers that he has been young, active, and very capable of doing what is now out of his power to accomplish; and therefore has left Congress to find out another man capable of making, if possible, a more brilliant figure than he has done; add to these the departure of Generals Lee and Thomas, taking some little account of S——r and H——, and then form an opinion of the G——ls of this army, their councils, &c.*

Your letter of the 15th ult. contained a very unfavourable account of the Carolinas, but I am glad to find by the subsequent one of the 23d<sup>245</sup> that the prospect brightens, and that Mr. Martin's first attempt, <sup>246</sup>(*through those universal instruments of tyranny, the Scotch,*) hath met with its deserved success. The old proverb of the first blow being half the battle cannot better apply than in these instances, the spirits of the vanquished being depressed in proportion as the victors get elated.

I am glad to find my camp

<sup>245</sup> S. Omitted.

<sup>246</sup> S. Omitted.

equipage in such forwardness; I shall expect to meet it, and I hope you, at New York, for which place I am preparing to set out on Thursday or Friday next. The accounts brought by Mr. Temple of the favourable disposition in the Ministry to accommodate matters does not correspond with their speeches in Parliament;—how then does he account for their inconsistency? If the commissioners do not come over with full and ample powers to treat with Congress, I sincerely wish they may never put their feet on American ground, as it must be self-evident (in the other case,) that *they come over*<sup>247</sup> with insidious intentions; to distract, divide, and create as much confusion as possible; how then can any man, let his passion for reconciliation be *never*<sup>248</sup> so strong, be so blinded and misled, as to embrace a measure evidently designed for his destruction? No man does, no man can wish the restoration of peace more fervently than I do, but I hope, whenever made, it will be upon such terms as will reflect honour upon the councils and wisdom of America. With you, I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be

<sup>247</sup> S. “they will.”

<sup>248</sup> S. “ever.”

attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects. My countrymen, I know from their form of government and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independency, but time and persecution brings many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find "Common Sense" is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men.

The four thousand men destined for Boston on the 5th, if the ministerialists had attempted our works on *Dorchester*,<sup>249</sup> or the lines at Roxbury, were to have been headed by *Old Put*.<sup>250\*</sup> But he would have had pretty easy work of it, as his motions were to have been regulated by signals, and those signals *from*<sup>251</sup> appearances. He was not to have made the attempt unless the town had been drained, or very considerably weakened *of*<sup>252</sup> its force.

<sup>253</sup>*I believe I mentioned in my last to you, that all those who took upon themselves the style and title (in Boston) of government's men, have shipped themselves off*

<sup>249</sup> S. "Dorchester Heights."

<sup>250</sup> S. "General Putnam."

<sup>251</sup> S. "by."

<sup>252</sup> S. "of."

<sup>253</sup> S. The rest of this letter omitted; similar language being found in a letter to John Augustine Washington, written the day before.

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\* It is printed "Old Put" in my book, as a quotation. Hence it has been assumed that Washington so used it. On reference now, however, to the original, I find it is written "headed by Old Put," without the quotation marks.

*in the same hurry, but under greater disadvantages than the King's (I think it idle to keep up the distinction of ministerial) troops have done, being obliged in a manner, to man their own vessels; seamen not being to be had for the King's transports, and submit to all the hardships that can be conceived. One or two of them have committed what it would have been happy for mankind if more of them had done, long ago; the act of suicide. By all accounts a more miserable set of beings does not exist than these; taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was almost omnipotent, and if it was not, that foreign aid was at hand, they were higher and more insulting in their opposition than the regulars themselves. When the order issued therefore for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock, no sudden flash of lightning, in a word, not even the last trump, could have struck them with greater consternation; they were at their wit's end, and conscious of their black ingratitude, chose to commit themselves in the manner before described, to the mercy of the winds and waves in a tempestuous season, rather than meet their offended countrymen; and with this declaration I am told they*

*have done it, that if they could have thought that the most abject submission would have procured peace for them, they would have humbled themselves in the dust, and kissed the rod that should be held out for chastisement.*

*Unhappy wretches! Deluded mortals! Would it not be good policy to grant a generous amnesty, and conquer these people by a generous forgiveness?\** I am, with Mrs. Washington's compliments joined with my own to Mrs. Reed, dear sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend and servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

*P. S. I have this instant received an express from Governor Cooke, informing me that a man of war is just arrived in the harbour at New Port, and that twenty-seven sail of vessels (supposed to be part of the fleet from Boston) are within Secenet Point. I have ordered General Sullivan's brigade, which marched from hence on Friday afternoon, to file off immediately for Providence, and General Greene's,*

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\* This sentence, "Would it not be good policy to grant a generous amnesty, and conquer these people by a generous forgiveness?" and the parenthetical phrase, in which Washington says it is idle longer to make a distinction between royal and ministerial troops, are not to be found in the letter to John Augustine Washington. They are, it seems to me, worth preserving, for one of them certainly very much qualifies the bitterness of Washington's tone towards the Loyalists.

*which was to begin its march to-day, to repair immediately to that place.* G. W.

## XVII.

NEW YORK, April 15, 1776.\*

DEAR SIR,

Your favour of the 13th was this Inst. put into my hands—scarce time<sup>254</sup> enough to acknowledge the receipt of it (by this Post), and to thank you for your great care and attention in providing my Camp Equipage—<sup>255</sup>*whatever the list you sent may fall short of your intention of providing, can be got here; and may be delayed; as the want or not of them, will depend upon circumstances.*

<sup>254</sup> S. “scarcely in time.”

<sup>255</sup> S. Passage in Italics omitted.

I am exceedingly concerned to hear of the divisions and Parties which prevail with you, and in the Southern Colonies on the score of Independence, &c.—these are the shelves we have to avoid or our Bark will split and tumble to pieces—here lays our great danger, and I almost tremble when I think of this rock—nothing but a disunion can hurt our cause—this will ruin it, if great prudence, tem-

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\* Of this letter I printed but a part in my Memoir, vol. i. p. 189. It will be found in Mr. Sparks's work, vol. iii. p. 357. I have the original.

per and moderation <sup>is</sup><sup>258</sup> not mixed in our councils and made the governing principles of the contending parties.

When, my good sir, will you be with me? I fear I shall have a difficult card to play in this Government,<sup>257</sup> and could wish\* for your assistance and advice to manage it. I have not time to add more, except that with great sincerity and truth I am, Dear Sir,

Y<sup>r</sup> most obed<sup>t</sup> and affect hble serv<sup>t</sup>

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

<sup>258</sup> *P. S. Mrs. Washington, &c. came the Harford Road, and not yet arrived—detain'd by the illness (on the Road) of poor Mr. Custis, who is now better and coming on.*†

<sup>258</sup> S. "are"—so printed by me.

<sup>257</sup> S. "(New York)" inserted after government.

<sup>258</sup> S. Postscript omitted.

## XVIII.

BRUNSWICK, *Novemb. 30, 1776.*‡

DEAR SIR,

The enclosed was put into my hands by an express from *the*<sup>259</sup> White Plains. Having no idea

<sup>259</sup> S. "the" omitted.

\* Printed by me "wish."

† Here, the series of what may be called strictly private letters ends, and occasionally what Washington wrote began to be recorded in Letter Books. But even at later dates, as will be seen, he continued to write to General Reed confidential and familiar letters which were not transcribed.

‡ The original of this letter, relating to the difficulty with General Lee, is not in my hands. I copied from Mr. Sparks, and he, I presume, from the Letter Book, for this, I am informed, is the first of the letters entered in the Letter Books. I now print from the Letter Book.

of its being a private letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it, as I had done all letters to you from the same place and Peck's Hill, upon the business of your office, as I conceived and found them to be. This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse, for seeing the contents of a letter which neither inclination, nor intention would have prompted me to. I thank you for the trouble and fatigue you have undergone in your journey to Burlington, and sincerely wish your labours may be crowned with the desired success. With best respects to Mrs. Reed,

I am, dear sir, &c.

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

<sup>250</sup> *P. S. The Petition referred*      <sup>260</sup> *Postscript omitted.*  
to *I keep.*

## XIX.

CAMP ABOVE TRENTON FALLS,  
23d December, 1776.\*

DEAR SIR,

The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last night, and if not,

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\* I am led to reprint this letter, dated but two days before the battle of Trenton, the original being in my possession, having been recovered since the publication of Mr. Sparks's work. Mr. Sparks copied it (vol. iv. p. 241) from Wilkinson's Memoirs.



to inform you, that Christmas day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake, keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us; our numbers, sorry *I am*<sup>261</sup> to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity will, nay must, justify *any*<sup>262</sup> attack. Prepare, and in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can, with a prospect of success; the more we can attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread, and *greater*<sup>263</sup> good will result from it.

If I had not been fully convinced before, of the enemy's designs, I have now ample testimony of their intentions to attack Philadelphia so soon as the ice will afford the means of conveyance.

As the Colonels of the Continental regiments might kick up some dust about command unless Cadwallader is considered by them in the light of a Brigadier, which I wish him to be, I desired General Gates, who is unwell and applied for leave to go to Philadelphia, to endeavour, if his health would permit him, to call and stay two or three days at Bristol in his way. I

<sup>261</sup> S. "am I;" and so printed by me and Wilkinson.

<sup>262</sup> S. "an," and by me "my," clearly a misprint.

<sup>263</sup> S. "the greater."

shall not be particular; we could not ripen matters for *our*<sup>264</sup> attack before the time mentioned in the first part of this letter, so much out of sorts, and so much in want of every thing are the troops under Sullivan, &c. <sup>265</sup>*Let me know by a careful express the plan you are to pursue.* The letter herewith sent, forward on to Philadelphia. I could wish it to be in time for the Southern post's departure, which will be, I believe by eleven o'clock to-morrow. I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have ordered our men to be provided with three day's provisions ready cooked, with which and their blankets, they are to march; for if we are successful, which Heaven grant, and the circumstances favour, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded, and not a soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with the permit; do the same with you.

To Joseph Reed, Esq.—or in his absence to Jno. Cadwallader, Esq., only, at Bristol.

<sup>264</sup> S. "an."

<sup>265</sup> S. This sentence is omitted by Wilkinson.

## XX.

HEAD QURS. MIDDLE BROOK,\*  
*May 29th, 1777.*

DEAR SIR,

Congress having empowered me by a Resolve, transmitted this morning, to assign one of the Generals, already appointed, to the command of the Light Horse, I mean that you should act in that line, if agreeable to yourself, and *wish*<sup>266</sup> you, in such <sup>266</sup> S. "I wish." case, to repair to Camp, as soon as you can.

I am, Dr sir, with great esteem, yr most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>,  
 G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## XXI.

CAMP AT MIDDLE BROOK,  
*June 11th, 1777.†*

DEAR SIR,

Your favour of the 4th was given to me by Jos Arrowsmith just as Mr. Peters inform'd me, he was about to set out for Philadelphia. I could not resist the inclination, however, of detaining him long enough to write you a short letter, to thank

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\* This letter (except the signature) is in the handwriting of a secretary. All the rest now reprinted are complete Washington autographs.

† Both Mr. Sparks and I have accidentally misprinted the date of this letter. In the original, it is clearly the *eleventh* and not the "fourteenth" of June.

you, as I do most sincerely, for the friendly and affectionate sentiments contain'd in your's of the above date towards me, and to assure you, that I am perfectly convinc'd of the sincerity of them.

True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter, which appear'd at that time to be the eccho 'of one from you. I was hurt, not because I thought my judgment wrong'd by the expressions contain'd in it, but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favourable manner in which your opinion upon all occasions, had been received—the impression they made—and the unreserved manner in which I wished, and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with anything, then, that carried with it a complexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuity, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to.

I sincerely wish that you may accept the appointment of Con-

gress, and the post I am desirous of placing you in, and must beg to be favour'd with an answer immediately upon the subject, as the service will not admit of delay. A general officer in that department would not only take of a great deal of trouble from me, but be a means of bringing those regiments into order and service with much more facility than it is in my power, divided as my attention is, can possibly do.\* Mr. Peter's waiting obliges me to conclude, and I do it with great truth.

Dear sir, your obedient and affectionate servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## XXII.

VALLEY-FORGE, *June 15th, 1778.*†

DEAR SIR,

I thank you *very*<sup>267</sup> much for your friendly favor of this date, and your polite attention in submitting the draught of your letter to Gov. Johnston to my perusal—I return it again, but before you transcribe a fair copy, I would wish to see you upon the subject of it—perhaps there

<sup>267</sup> S. “very” omitted.

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\* “Possibly to do;” and so printed by Mr. Sparks.

† This letter was not published in my Memoir. The original manuscript is in my possession. It is not in the Letter Books.

are some parts of it which might receive a small alteration—In the present situation of things all correspondence of this nature must, and will be weighed and scanned with a scrupulous exactness; and even compliment, if carried far, may not pass entirely uncensured.

There is another *consideration with me.*<sup>268</sup> Congress perhaps at this instant are deliberating on <sup>269</sup>*an answer to give the Commissioners to an address they have received from them.* Should <sup>270</sup>*a letter therefore from a Member (in which light you will be considered)*<sup>271</sup> *hold out sentiments different from theirs,*<sup>272</sup> *an unfavourable use will doubtless*<sup>273</sup> *be made of it. I am dear sir, &c.*

To General Reed, at Major Henry's.

<sup>268</sup> S. "consideration which weighs."

<sup>269</sup> S. "on an answer to the address which they have received from the commissioners."

<sup>270</sup> S. "Should your letter therefore considered as coming from a member contain."

<sup>271</sup> S. "(in which light you will be considered)" omitted.

<sup>272</sup> S. "repugnant to."

<sup>273</sup> S. "more than probably."

### XXIII.

FREDERICKSBURG, <sup>274</sup>*in the State of New York, Novr. 27, '78.\** <sup>274</sup> S. Omitted.

DEAR SIR,

I am upon the eve of my departure for Winter Quarters, but shall not quit my present roof

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\* Of this letter I printed but a portion at p. 141, vol. ii., and in that probably followed Mr. Sparks's text as a matter of convenience, for I find his variations from the MS. all copied by me. This letter is not recorded in the Letter Books.

until I acknowledge, and thank you for your obliging favor of the 25th ult.

Unless the officer who commanded the dispersed Dragoons of Baylor's Regiment was directed by Mr. Caldwell to Trenton, he was not only guilty of an unpardonable piece of indiscretion, but disobedience of orders; *for*<sup>275</sup> he was instructed to collect the scattered remains of that Regimt and repair with them, to such place (out of the common rout of the waggons) as the Quarter mr. should direct—I have ordered an enquiry into his conduct on *this*<sup>276</sup> occasion.

<sup>275</sup> S. "as."

<sup>276</sup> S. "that."

It is most devoutly to be wished that some happy expedient could be hit upon to restore credit to our paper emissions; and punish the infamous practice of forestalling—and *the*<sup>277</sup> engrossing such articles as are essentially necessary to the very existence of the army—and which *by these practices*,<sup>278</sup> comes to it thro' the hands of these people at 50 p. ct. advance, to the great injury and depreciation of our money, by accumulating the quantum, necessary for ordinary purposes to an *enormous*<sup>279</sup> sum, which must end in a total stagnation of all pur-

<sup>277</sup> S. "the" omitted; so by me.

<sup>278</sup> S. "this means;" and so printed by me.

<sup>279</sup> S. "amazing;" and so printed by me.

chases, unless some remedy can be soon, and effectually, applied.

It is also most devoutly to be wished that faction was at an end, and that those to whom everything dear and valuable is entrusted, would lay aside party views, and return to first principles.—Happy—happy—thrice happy country, if such *was*<sup>280</sup> the government of it.—But alas! we are not to expect that the path *will be*<sup>281</sup> strewn with flowers—That great and good Being who rules the Universe has disposed matters otherwise and for wise purposes, I am persuaded.

As my letter to Congress of this date has *carried*<sup>282</sup> a full acct of the Cantonment of the Troops, and other matters of public concern<sup>mt</sup>, I have no need to repeat *them*<sup>283</sup> to you as an individual member.—The conduct of the enemy at New York and Rhode Island is too misterious to be accounted for by any rule of common sense—The Transports containing their second Imbarkation still remain in the harbour—for what purpose *is*<sup>284</sup> not easy to conjecture.

I shall hope, when the army gets a little settled in Winter Quarters that the com<sup>ee</sup> of arrangement will perfect the good work they *began*<sup>285</sup> in the Summer, and draw order from the

<sup>280</sup> S. “were;” so by me.

<sup>281</sup> S. “is to be;” so by me.

<sup>282</sup> S. “given;” so by me.

<sup>283</sup> S. “it;” so by me.

<sup>284</sup> S. “it is;” so by me.

<sup>285</sup> S. “began;” so by me.



Chaos we have been in for a long time past.—

It is eleven o'clock at night, and I am to set out early in the morning, for which reasons I shall only add my thanks for the favourable sentiments 'you are pleased to entertain for, *and have expressed*<sup>286</sup> for me.—But in a more especial manner, for your good wishes and prayers.—With sincere *regard*<sup>287</sup> and affection—and with compliments to Mrs. Reed,

<sup>286</sup> S. Omitted; and by me.

<sup>287</sup> S. "esteem;" and so by me.

I am, Dr Sir,  
Yr most Obed<sup>t</sup> and Obliged  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

#### XXIV.

MIDDLE BROOK, Dec. 12, 1778.\*

DEAR SIR,

Your favour of the 7th inst., by Mr. Laurens, came to my hands a day or two ago, *previous*<sup>288</sup> to which I should have done myself the pleasure of congratulating you (which I now do very sincerely) on your late election to the government of Pennsylvania, had not Sir Harry's† *late*<sup>289</sup> extra manœuvre up the North-River kept me upon the march and countermarch from the 5th till yesterday;

<sup>288</sup> S. "previously."

<sup>289</sup> S. "late" omitted.

\* This letter is in the Letter Books.

† "Sir Henry's."

when I arrived at these, my quarters for the winter, and employed too much of my attention <sup>290</sup>*to investigate his designs, to indulge in more agreeable amusements.*

What did or could prompt the Knight to this expedition, <sup>291</sup>*is beyond the reach of my conception, considering the unseasonableness of it. Three things only appeared to me probable: a rescue of the Convention troops, a stroke at the rear of our army, or a surprise of the posts in the Highlands. The two first I had seen perfectly out of his reach before I left the North-River; and not conceiving that he could miss it so much in point of intelligence as to mistime matters so egregiously, (if either of the other two<sup>292</sup> was his object,) it followed, of consequence, that the last must be his aim; and though I had left them,\* as I thought, in a state of security, and in the hands of a good officer—McDougall, I could not help being uneasy lest some<sup>293</sup> disaster might befall them<sup>294</sup>—and† posted back from Elizabethtown on the morning<sup>295</sup> of the 5th, and got within twelve or fifteen miles of King's Ferry, when I was met by an express*

<sup>290</sup> S. "for investigating his designs to allow me to indulge," &c.

•

<sup>291</sup> S. "I am at a loss to discover."

<sup>292</sup> S. "two first."

<sup>293</sup> S. "a disaster."

<sup>294</sup> S. "might happen."

<sup>295</sup> S. "at four o'clock of the morning."

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\* "Him."

† Printed "I."

informing me that the enemy had landed at that place, <sup>296</sup>*set fire to two small log'd houses, destroyed nine barrels of spoiled herrings, and had set sail for New-York.\**

Thus ended this notable expedition, which was conducted (in the preparation) with so much secrecy, that all the flag-boats to and from the city were stopped, and not a mouse permitted to creep within their lines. The only bad consequence we have felt from it, (and, as the weather has turned out, not a trifling one,) is that it has delayed the Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania troops four days in hutting, and has occasioned them to march through snow and bad roads to come at their ground, instead of having sunshine and good ones, which was the case before the storm on Thursday last.

It gives me very sincere pleasure to find that there is likely to be a coalition of the Whigs in your State, (a few only excepted,) and that the Assembly *of it are* <sup>297</sup> so well disposed to second your endeavours in bringing those murderers of our cause—the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers to condign pun-

<sup>296</sup> S. “burned two or three log houses with nine barrels of spoilt herrings, and had re-embarked and sailed for New York again.”

<sup>297</sup> S. “of it” omitted—“are” printed “is.”

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\* So, literally, in the original, though Mr. Sparks in his first pamphlet expresses some doubt as to the accuracy of my text.

ishment. It is much to be lamented that each State, long ere this, has not hunted them down as *the*<sup>298</sup> pests of society, and the greatest enemies we have to the happiness of America. I would to God that *one*<sup>299</sup> of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman. No punishment, in my opinion, is too great for the man who can "build his greatness upon his country's ruin."

<sup>298</sup> S. "the" omitted

<sup>299</sup> S. "some one "

General Lee's publication in Dunlap's Gazette of the 3rd inst., (and I have seen no other,) puts me in a disagreeable situation. I have neither leisure nor inclination to enter the lists with him in a newspaper: and so far as his production points to personality, I can and do from my inmost soul despise it; but when he has most barefacedly misrepresented facts in some places, and thrown out insinuations in others that have not the smallest foundation in truth, not to attempt a refutation is a tacit acknowledgment of the justice of his assertions; for though there are thousands who know how unsupported his piece is, there are yet tens of thousands that know nothing of the matter, and will be led naturally to con-

*clude*<sup>300</sup> that bold and confident assertions, uncontradicted, must be founded in truth. <sup>300</sup> S. "believe."

It became a part of General Lee's plan, from the moment of his arrest, (though it was an event solicited by himself,) to have the world believe that he was a persecuted man, and that party was at the bottom of it. But however convenient it may have been\* for his purpose to establish this *doctrine*,<sup>301</sup> I defy him or his most zealous partisans to adduce a single† instance in proof of it, unless bringing him to tryal at his own request is considered in this light. <sup>301</sup> S. "belief."

I can do more; I will defy any person‡ out of my own family to say that I have ever mentioned his name after his tryal commenced, if it was to be avoided; and when *it was*<sup>302</sup> not, if I have not studiously declined expressing any sentiment of him or of his behaviour. <sup>302</sup> S. "it was" omitted. How far this conduct accords with his, let his own breast decide. If he conceives that I was opposed to him because he found himself disposed to enter into a party against me—if he thought I stood in his road to preferment, and therefore that it was convenient to lessen me

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\* "It may have been" omitted.

‡ "Man."

† Printed by me "simple."

in the esteem of my countrymen, in order to pave the way for his own advancement—I have only to observe, that as I never entertained any jealousy of, or *apprehension from*<sup>303</sup> him, so neither did I ever\* do more than common civility and a proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion. His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration; and that I have escaped the venom of his tongue and pen so long, is more to be wondered at than applauded; as it is a favour *that*<sup>304</sup> no officer under whose immediate command he ever served has the happiness (if happiness can be thus denominated) of boasting.

Were I to give in to private conveniency and amusement, I should not be able to resist the invitations of my friends to make Philadelphia (instead of a squeezed up room or two) my quarters for the winter. But the affairs of the army requires a constant attention and presence, and circumstanced as matters are at this *juncture*<sup>305</sup> calls for some degree of care and address to keep it from crumbling. As peace and retirement are my

<sup>303</sup> S. “apprehension from” omitted.

<sup>304</sup> S. “of which.”

<sup>305</sup> S. “time.”

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\* “Ever” omitted.

ultimate aim, and the most  
 pleasing and flattering *wish*<sup>306</sup> of  
 my soul, everything *advancive*<sup>307</sup>  
 of this end contributes to my  
 satisfaction, however difficult and  
 inconvenient in the attainment,  
 and will reconcile any place and  
 all circumstances to my feelings,  
 whilst I *remain*<sup>308</sup> in service.

<sup>306</sup> S. "hope."

<sup>307</sup> S. "promotive."

<sup>308</sup> S. "continue."

The officers of the army must  
 be grateful for your endeavours  
 to serve them; and those of your  
 own State will, I trust, feel the  
 salutary effects of your exertions  
 in their favour. They really  
 merit it, and resignation must  
 cease to be wonderful, when it  
 is a fact too notorious to be de-  
 nied that officers cannot live in  
 the army under present circum-  
 stances, whilst they see others  
 enriching themselves by an in-  
 finity of ways. These are severe  
 tests of public virtue, and should  
 not in point of policy be pushed  
 too far.

With sincere regard and affec-  
 tion, and with compliments to  
 Mrs. Reed, I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient friend  
 and servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.\*

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\* The above letter—at least so I am informed by a friend who has  
 examined the records in the Department of State at Washington—is the  
 first of my manuscript collection which is to be found in the Letter Books.  
 I presume Mr. Sparks printed from the Letter Books, and this was probably  
 not among the copies I sent him. The text of the original and the Letter  
 Book certainly do not agree literally.

## XXV.

MIDDLEBROOK, *Mar.* 28, 1779.\*

DEAR SIR,

The enemy have some enterprize in view.—New London, on account of the Frigates in the river, and because boats have been preparing at the East end of Long Island, and Troops for some time past drawing thitherward, is supposed to be the object.—Probably it is so—but as the season is now approaching when either negociation, or vigorous exertions *must take place*; and General Clinton<sup>309</sup> doubtless will, in the latter case, and in pursuance of the predatory plan talked of (by the minority and not disavowed by administration) attempt something that will give eclat to his arms. I should not be much surprized if some vigorous efforts were used against Annapolis, Baltimore, or even Phil<sup>a</sup> itself.—I do not mean with a view to hold either of these places but to plunder or destroy them—General Clinton (under pretence of visiting the Troops) is now at the East end of Long Island with Sir Wm. Erskine—Admiral Gambier is gone to Rhode Island—and one

<sup>309</sup> S. “must take the place of inactivity, and as General Clinton.”

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\* But a part of this letter was published by me, vol. ii. p. 72. This letter is, I believe, not in the Letter Book.



of my most intelligent correspondents informs me *it*<sup>310</sup> is surmised that the Troops at that place are to be withdrawn—Transports with provisions have gone from New York *towards*<sup>311</sup> Rhode Island—and a number of Privateers have been detained from their cruises and sent along with them—Upon the whole, I cannot help suspecting that the preparations have been too long making—too formidable—and too open for any enterprize against New London; *for*<sup>312</sup> which place the fears of the people are *up*,<sup>313</sup> and as we cannot tell where it may fall, we should, as far as human prudence, and the means in our hands will enable us, be guarded at all points—The sole purpose therefore of this letter is to suggest *to*<sup>314</sup> your consideration the expediency of adopting, in time, some general plan (without taking notice of the present suggestion, thereby creating, probably unnecessary fears) for giving an alarm to the Militia of the country, and for *fixing*<sup>315</sup> places of rendezvous for them, that in cases of sudden emergency they *may be quickly assembled*<sup>316</sup> free from tumult or disorder; for be assured if anything is attempted against the

<sup>310</sup> S. "that it."

<sup>311</sup> S. "to."

<sup>312</sup> S. "concerning."

<sup>313</sup> S. "awake."

<sup>314</sup> S. "for."

<sup>315</sup> S. "fixing on."

<sup>316</sup> S. "may quickly assemble."

City\* of Phila, the preparations for it will be *hid*<sup>317</sup> under the darkest veil—and the movement when the plan is ripe for execution, will be rapid.

As my motive to this suggestion is good I will offer no apology for the freedom, but assure you that I am with great respect,

Dr sir, yr most obed. servant,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excellcy,

Joseph Reed, Esqr, Presidt.

## XXVI.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MIDDLEBROOK,  
*May 8th, 1779.*

DEAR SIR,

I have delayed acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 1st, in expectation that it would soon be followed by an official one which would enable me to take final measures on the subject of the trial.

The explanation with which you have obliged me gives me pleasure in the same proportion as the disagreeable inferences I had drawn gave me pain. It wounds me sensibly to see appearances of any† distrust of my equal attention to the security

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\* "The City of" omitted by me.

† "Any" omitted by me.

and welfare of the different States; *and*<sup>318</sup> my ardent desire to cultivate mutual confidence and harmony with every one, will always make me glad to find any apprehensions I may entertain on this delicate subject\* *unfounded*.<sup>319</sup>

I am also happy to find *it*<sup>320</sup> your opinion that the footing on which General Arnold's trial is now put will be agreeable. If the Council think the needful testimony can be ready by the 1st of June, it will come on then. As I do not hear from them, and time is slipping away fast, I enclose a letter to General Arnold, fixing the trial at that day *week*; <sup>321</sup> you will be pleased to have *delivered*<sup>322</sup> to him in case it corresponds with the sense of the Council; otherwise it is to be returned to me; but at all events I beg you will press a decision, as General Arnold has again signified his anxious desire to me that the trial may be brought on, and as the sooner it is, the more convenient it will be to our military arrangements.

Speaking of witnesses, you say Congress have declined exercising any compulsory power over their officers on the occa-

<sup>318</sup> S. "and" omitted.

<sup>319</sup> S. "ill-founded."

<sup>320</sup> S. "it is."

<sup>321</sup> S. "week" omitted.

<sup>322</sup> S. "which you will please to cause to be delivered."

sion; where any *person*<sup>323</sup> in the military line *is*<sup>324</sup> summoned, as I mentioned in my letter to the Council, it is my duty to order their attendance, which I shall of course do. With respect to these, therefore, the interposition of Congress would be unnecessary.

With very great regard and esteem, I am, dear sir,

Y<sup>r</sup> most obed. servant,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.\*

<sup>323</sup> S. "persons."

<sup>324</sup> S. "are."

## XXVII.

WEST-POINT, *July 29th*, 1779.†

DEAR SIR,

I have a pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favour† of the 15th inst., and in finding, by it, that the author of the *Queries "Political and Military,"* has had no great cause to exult in the favourable reception of them by the public.

Without a clue, I should have been at *no loss*<sup>325</sup> to trace the malevolent writer; but I have seen a history of the transaction, and felt a pleasure mingled with

<sup>325</sup> S. "no great loss."

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\* This is in the Letter Book.

† There is an intermediate letter of 20th May, 1779, of which I have not the autograph, and probably copied from Mr. Sparks's text. There is one also of the 5th July, '79, which I did not print. This letter of 29th July is in the Letter Book.

‡ "Letter."

pain, at the narration. To stand well in the estimation of one's country, is a happiness that no rational creature can be insensible of. To be pursued, first, under the mask of friendship, and when disguise would suit no longer, as an open calumniator, with gross misrepresentation, and *self-known*\* falsehoods, carries an alloy which no *temper*<sup>326</sup> can bear with perfect composure.

<sup>326</sup> S. "no mind."

The motives which actuate this gentleman are *better understood*<sup>327</sup> by himself than me. If he can produce a single instance in which I have mentioned his name (after his trial commenced) where it was in my power to avoid it, and when it was not, where I have done it with† the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect; I will consent that the world shall view my character in as disreputable a light as he wishes to place it. What cause then there is for such a profusion of venom, as he is emitting upon all occasions, unless by an act of public duty, in bringing him to trial, at his own solicitation, I have disappointed him, and raised his ire, or *conceiving*<sup>328</sup> that in proportion as he can darken the shades of my character, he illuminates

<sup>327</sup> S. "can better be accounted for."

<sup>328</sup> S. "or he conceives."

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\* "*Self-known*" is italicized in the original.

† "on."

his own. Whether these, I say, or motives *yet*<sup>329</sup> *more dark and hidden*,<sup>330</sup> govern him, I shall not undertake to decide, nor have I time to inquire into them at present.

<sup>329</sup> S. "still."

<sup>330</sup> S. "hidden and dark."

If I had ever assumed the character of a military genius, and *the officer*<sup>331</sup> of experience, if, under these false colours, I had solicited the command I was honoured with, or if, after my appointment, I had presumptuously driven on under the sole guidance of my own judgment, and self-will, and misfortunes, the result of obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity, had followed, I should have thought myself a proper *object*<sup>332</sup> for the lash, not only of his, but the pen of every other writer, and a fit *subject*<sup>333</sup> of public resentment.—But when it is well known that the command, in a manner was forced upon me—that I accepted it with the utmost diffidence, from a consciousness that it required greater abilities, and more experience than I possessed, to conduct a great military machine embarrassed as I knew ours must be, by a variety of complex circumstances, *and*<sup>334</sup> as it were but little *better*<sup>335</sup> than a mere chaos—and when nothing more was promised on

<sup>331</sup> S. "an officer."

<sup>332</sup> S. "subject."

<sup>333</sup> S. "object."

<sup>334</sup> S. "being."

<sup>335</sup> S. "more."

my part than has been most inviolably performed, it is rather grating to pass over in silence charges, which may impress the uninformed, tho' others know that these charges have neither reason nor truth to support them, and that a *simple*<sup>336</sup> narrative of facts would defeat all his assertions, notwithstanding they are made with an effrontery, which few men do, and for the honor of human nature none ought, to possess.

<sup>336</sup> S. "plain and simple."

If this gentleman is envious of my station, and *conceives*<sup>337</sup> that I stand in his way to preferment, I can assure him, in\* most solemn terms, that the first wish of my soul is to return† to that peaceful retirement, and domestick ease and happiness from whence I came—To this end, all my labours have been directed; and for this purpose have I been more than four years a perfect slave; endeavouring under as many embarrassing circumstances as ever fell to one man's lot to encounter, and as *pure*<sup>338</sup> motives as ever man was influenced by, to promote the cause and service I had embarked in.

<sup>337</sup> S. "thinks."

<sup>338</sup> S. "with as pure;" and by me.

You may form a pretty good judgment of my prospect of a

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\* "The most."

† Printed by me "retire."

brilliant campaign, and the figure I shall *cut*<sup>339</sup> in it, when I inform you, that excepting about 400 recruits from the State of *Massachusetts*<sup>340</sup> (a portion of *which*,<sup>341</sup> I am told, are children hired at about 1500 dollars each for 9 months service) I have had no reinforcement to this army since last campaign, while our numbers have been, and now are diminishing daily by the expiring term of men's services, to say nothing of the natural waste by sickness—death—and desertion.

Discouraging as *all*<sup>342</sup> this is, I feel more from the state of our currency, and the little attention which hitherto appears to have been paid to our finances, than from the smallness of our army—and yet (Providence having so often taken us up, when bereft of *other*<sup>343</sup> hope) I trust we shall not fail even in this.—The present temper and disposition of the people to facilitate a loan—to discountenance speculation—and to *appreciate*<sup>344</sup> the money *is*<sup>345</sup> a happy presage of resulting good, and ought to be cherished by every possible means not repugnant to good order and government.

With you, I conceive that great events are comprized in the next six months—and wish

<sup>339</sup> S. "make in it."

<sup>340</sup> S. "Massachusetts Bay."

<sup>341</sup> S. "whom."

<sup>342</sup> S. "all" omitted.

<sup>343</sup> S. "every other;" and by me.

<sup>344</sup> S. "to raise the value of."

<sup>345</sup> S. "are."



I had such information as would carry me along with you in opinion, that Spain has declared in our favor.—But having no knowledge of facts to ground such a belief on, I am apprehensive that the natural sloth of one Court, and the intrigues and artifices of the other, will keep things in a state of negotiation till the effect of the present exertion of G. B., this campaign, is known, when, possibly, a new scene may *open*.<sup>346</sup>

The public are already possessed of the little military occurrences of this Quarter—I need not repeat them—some considerable movement of the enemy is in agitation, but of what nature—and where pointed, I have not yet been able to discover—Lord Cornwallis is arrived, and a number of troops (it is said) are hourly expected.

My respectful compliments attend Mrs. Reed and the ladies of yr family—with very great esteem and regard,

I am, Dr Sir,

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> and affec<sup>e</sup>

Hble Serv<sup>t</sup>,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excely,

Joseph Reed, Esq.

<sup>346</sup> S. “and some new scene open to our view.”

## XXVIII.

WEST POINT, *Augt. 22d, '79.*\*

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Tilghman delivered me your favour of the 8th Inst., for which and the favourable sentiments expressed of me in your publication, addressed to the Printer of the Maryland Journal, you will permit me to offer my grateful acknowledgements.

The loss of Fort Washington simply—abstracted from the circumstances which attended it, was an event that gave me much pain, because it deprived the army of the services of many valuable men at a critical period, and the public of many valuable lives, by the cruelties which were inflicted upon them in their captive state.—But this concern received additional poignancy from two considerations which *were but little known*, and one of them<sup>347</sup>† never will be known to the world, because I shall never *attempt*<sup>348</sup> to palliate my own *foibles*<sup>349</sup> by exposing *the error*<sup>350</sup> of another, nor indeed could either of them come before the public unless there had been such a charge as must have rendered an enquiry

<sup>347</sup> S. “did not appear, one of which.”

<sup>348</sup> S. “attempt” omitted.

<sup>349</sup> S. “faults.”

<sup>350</sup> S. “those of.”

\* This is in the Letter Book.

† Printed by me “some of them.”

into the causes of this miscarriage necessary.—The one was a noncompliance in General Greene with an order sent him from White Plains before I marched for the western side of Hudson's River to withdraw the artillery, stores, &c., from the Fort, allowing him, however, some latitude for the exercise of his own judgment as he was upon the spot, and could decide better from appearances and circumstances than I *the propriety*<sup>351</sup> of a total evacuation.—The other was a Resolve of Congress *in the emphatic words*,<sup>352</sup>

"*Friday*,<sup>353</sup> Oct. 11th, 1776."

"Resolved, that General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art and whatever expence to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River, between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's Frigates lately gone up, as to hinder them from receiving succours."

When I came to Fort Lee and found no measures taken *for*<sup>354</sup> an evacuation in consequence of the order aforementioned—when I found General Greene, of whose judgment and candour I entertained a good opinion, decidedly opposed to it,—when I

<sup>351</sup> S. "on the propriety."

<sup>352</sup> S. "in the strong and emphatical words, following." It is printed "emphatical" by me.

<sup>353</sup> S. "Friday" omitted; also by me.

<sup>354</sup> S. "towards;" so also by me.

found other opinions *coinciding*<sup>355</sup> with his—when the wishes of Congress to obstruct the navigation of the North River, *and*<sup>356</sup> which were delivered in such forceable terms *to me*,<sup>357</sup> recurred—when I knew that the easy communication between the different parts of the army then separated by the river depended upon it—and lastly when I considered that our policy led us to waste the campaign without coming to a general action on the one hand, or *to suffer*<sup>358</sup> the enemy to overrun the country on the other, I conceived that every impediment *which*<sup>359</sup> stood in their way was a mean to answer these purposes, *and*<sup>360</sup> when thrown into the scale *of*<sup>361</sup> those opinions which were opposed to an evacuation caused that warfare in my mind and hesitation which ended in the loss of the garrison, and being repugnant to my own judgment of the *advisability*<sup>362</sup> of attempting to hold the Post, filled me with the greater regret.

The two great causes which led to this misfortune (and which I have before recited) as well perhaps as my reasoning upon it, which occasioned the delay, were concealed from public view; *of course*<sup>363</sup> left the field of censure quite open for

<sup>355</sup> S. “so coincident;” printed by me “coincident.”

<sup>356</sup> S. “and” omitted.

<sup>357</sup> S. “to me” omitted.

<sup>358</sup> S. “suffering;” so by me.

<sup>359</sup> S. “that.”

<sup>360</sup> S. “these.”

<sup>361</sup> S. “with.”

<sup>362</sup> S. “advisableness;” so by me.

<sup>363</sup> S. “and of course.”

any, and every labourer who inclined to work in it, and afforded a fine theme for the pen of a malignant writer, who is *always*<sup>364</sup> less regardful of facts than the point he wants to establish where he has the field wholly to himself, and where concealment of a few circumstances *will answer his purpose*<sup>365</sup>—or where a small transposition of them will give a very different complexion to the same *transaction*.<sup>366</sup>

<sup>364</sup> S. "always" omitted.

<sup>365</sup> S. "answers his purposes."

<sup>366</sup> S. "thing."

Why I have run into such a *lengthy*<sup>367</sup> discussion of this point—at this time—I am at a loss myself to tell—I meant but to touch it, en passant, but one idea succeeded to another, till it would seem that I had been preparing my defence for a regular charge.

<sup>367</sup> S. "long."

My ideas of what seems to be the only mode left to keep our Battalions to their establishment or near it, you are already acquainted with,\* as they were conveyed at large to the *Comee* at Valley Forge, in '78.—I have seen no cause since to change my opinion on this head but abundant reason to confirm *me in it*.<sup>368</sup> No man dislikes short and temporary enlistments more than I do—No man ever† had greater cause to

<sup>368</sup> S. "confirm it."

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\* "With" omitted.

† "Ever" omitted.

reprobate *and even curse*<sup>369</sup> the fatal policy of the measure than I have—*Nor*<sup>370</sup> no man (with decency) ever opposed it more in the early part of this contest; and had my advice respecting this matter been pursued in the years seventy five and six, our money would have been upon a very different establishment in point of credit *to what it is at this day*,<sup>371</sup> as\* we should have saved millions of *pd*<sup>s</sup> in bounty money, and the consequent evils of expiring armies, and new levies.—But those hours are passed never to be recalled—such men as compose the bulk of an army are in a different train of thinking *and acting*<sup>372</sup> to what they were in *the*<sup>373</sup> early stages of the war, and nothing is now left *for it*<sup>374</sup> but an annual and systematical mode of drafting; which while we retain the stamina of an army (engaged for the war) will be the best, *indeed*<sup>375</sup> I see no other substitute, for voluntary enlistments—In fact it will come to this, for there are people *enow*<sup>376</sup> (old soldiers) who will *hire*<sup>377</sup> as substitutes, and the difference will be, that *instead*<sup>378</sup> of the public's emitting, or borrowing money to pay *their bounties (which is en-*

<sup>369</sup> S. "and even curse" omitted.

<sup>370</sup> S. "Nor" omitted.

<sup>371</sup> S. "from what it now is."

<sup>372</sup> S. "and acting" omitted.

<sup>373</sup> S. "those."

<sup>374</sup> S. "for it" omitted.

<sup>375</sup> S. "indeed" omitted.

<sup>376</sup> S. "now."

<sup>377</sup> S. "hire themselves."

<sup>378</sup> S. "in lieu."

larged greatly<sup>379</sup> every new enlistment) these sums<sup>380</sup> will be paid by individuals—will increase the demand for circulating cash—and, as with all other commodities in demand, raise the value of it by multiplying the means of its use.<sup>381</sup>

How far those governments which are rent and weakened by intestine<sup>382</sup> divisions have energy enough to carry statutes of this nature<sup>383</sup> into execution I do not pretend to be a competent judge, but such as are well established and organized, I am sure can do it—Those<sup>384</sup> that are not, the propriety of the measure is so necessary and obvious, that I should entertain little doubt of their success in the experiment.

The sponge which you say some gentlemen have talked of using, unless there can be a discrimination and proper saving clauses provided (and how far this is practicable I know not) would be unjust and impolitic in the extreme.—Perhaps, I do not understand what they mean by using the sponge—If it be to sink the money in the hands of the holders of it, and at their<sup>385</sup> loss, it cannot in my opinion be justified<sup>386</sup> upon any principle of common policy—common sense—or common honesty.—But

<sup>379</sup> S. "the bounties which increase rapidly."

<sup>380</sup> S. "bounties."

<sup>381</sup> S. "for using it."

<sup>382</sup> S. "internal."

<sup>383</sup> S. "kind."

<sup>384</sup> S. "As to those."

<sup>385</sup> S. "their own."

<sup>386</sup> S. "stand justified upon any principles."

how far a man, for instance, who has possessed himself of 20 paper dollars by means of one, or the value of one, in specie, has a just claim upon the public for more than one of the latter in redemption, and in that ratio according to the periods of depreciation, I leave to those who are better acquainted with the nature of the subject, and have more leizure than I have to discuss.—To me a measure of this kind appears substantial justice to the public, and *each individual*;<sup>387</sup> but whether it is capable of administration I have never thought enough of it to form any opinion.

<sup>387</sup> S. “to individuals.”

<sup>388</sup> *We have given the enemy another little stroke at Powleshook—an acct of which is transmitted to Congress by this conveyance, and will, I presume, be handed to the public—in the mean while I have the pleasure to inform you that abt 160 prisoners and the colours of the Garrison were brought off.*

<sup>388</sup> S. The passage in Italics omitted.

I am with great esteem and regard,

Dr Sir,

Yr most obed' and affe

Hble Servt,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excellcy,

Joseph Reed, Esqr,

President.



## XXIX.

WEST POINT, Oct. 22d, 1779.\*

DEAR SIR,

Three days ago, I received your obliging favor of the 14th, and was sorry to find you had been so much indisposed.—Before this I hope you have perfectly recovered.—Your early attention and that of the Assembly to my requisitions have my warmest thanks,—and the more so, from the situation in which they found you. I could wish, however, that the three months service of the Militia had been made to commence, only from the time of their joining the army.—I need not enter into a detail of reasons for this with you, as your own judgment and experience will, I am persuaded, have already anticipated them. Your intention of leading your Militia, in case they are brought to the field, is a circumstance honorable to yourself and flattering to me. The example alone would have its weight, but seconded by your knowledge of discipline—*abilities*,<sup>359</sup> activity and bravery, it could not fail of happy effects. Men are influenced greatly by the conduct of

<sup>359</sup> S. “your abilities.”

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\* This is in the Letter Books.

their superiors—and particularly so, where they have both their confidence and affection.

With respect to the point to which you call my recollection—I confess—when you intimated your desire of Continental rank to me, as it passed cursorily through my mind—it struck me as a matter of indifference;—or at least as one against which no important objections then occurred inasmuch as it was to have no operation in the line; however, I must now candidly acknowledge, and *shall*<sup>390</sup> do it without hesitation, from motives of general duty—from a confidence in your friendship as well as in your zeal for the public service—and from the express authority of your letter—that having maturely weighed the subject—and examined the consequences to which it might lead—I think it cannot be obtained—either with a view to the purpose you mentioned, when you first broached the point to me—or with respect to the present occasion for which the Militia are called out.

<sup>390</sup> S. “I shall.”

The discontents—the jealousies—the uneasinesses that have prevailed in the Army; the complaints which have been added on acct of rank being conferred out of the common course, are

all opposed to the measure.—  
 These uneasinesses, my dear sir,  
 tho' not quite so prevalent  
 among the different ranks of  
 officers as they were, are far,  
 very far, from being done away  
 —and would, I fear, proceed to  
 more than their former height  
 upon any supposed injury, whe-  
 ther real or imaginary—to what  
 they *esteemed*<sup>391</sup> their rights.—  
 Among the General Officers and  
 those next in rank, there would  
 be much reason to apprehend  
 this, as they (particularly the  
 former) have loudly complained  
 on the subject of rank being  
 given, even where motives of  
 national policy—and indeed ne-  
 cessity—were urged to justify  
 it, and *reluctantly*<sup>392</sup> yielded to  
 it, merely from that considera-  
 tion. From hence, and as in  
 your case this consideration  
 could not be urged—I should  
 fear that it would be attended  
 with greater disgust—not from  
 any personal, individual objec-  
 tion, but from an idea that the  
 appointment itself materially  
 affected their rights and those  
 of the officers in general. Hence  
 it is that I have uniformly with-  
 held my aid *to*<sup>393</sup> all applications  
 for brevet commissions to for-  
 eigners and others who *had*<sup>394</sup> or  
 were about to quit the service—

<sup>391</sup> S. “esteem.”

<sup>392</sup> S. “they reluctantly.”

<sup>393</sup> S. “from all.”

<sup>394</sup> S. “had quitted.”

professedly—never to interfere with the line of our army.

The situation of our officers is delicate—and perhaps requires a greater degree of attention, than that of any others,—deriving no emoluments from the service, but rather losing at the best—patriotism and a love of honor are the motives to their continuing in it. These must be the considerations which influence the conduct of by far the *greatest*<sup>395</sup> part—and tho' by these motives the officers are placed in a much more respectable point of view than if they were governed by interest, yet the ties are *not sufficiently strong*<sup>396</sup> to induce their submission, or at least without great difficulty, to any measures they esteem injurious.

For these several reasons I cannot in policy advise to any measures that might have a tendency to obtain *it*<sup>397</sup> for you. Nor do I think, after mature reflection, that *the rank being*<sup>398</sup> given by brevet which is contrary to the present views of Congress and their own resolves (24th Nov. 1778, and 20 Feb. 1779), founded on the discontents which a contrary practice had created—or circumscribed in its extent by any qualifications which could be thought of would alter the matter, or

<sup>395</sup> S. "greater."

<sup>396</sup> S. "are not so strong."

<sup>397</sup> S. "obtain the rank."

<sup>398</sup> S. "that its being given."

produce the least change in the sentiments of the officers. In any case, the ideas of rank and precedence would occur,—and I have too much reason to believe would give great uneasiness. The temper of the general officers is at this moment a good deal soured—Their distresses proceeding from the amazing depreciation of money *on*<sup>399</sup> one hand and *a*<sup>400</sup> discrimination of Congress in the allowance of subsistence on the other, *needs*<sup>401</sup> no fresh leaven to set their discontents *a working*;<sup>402</sup> Rank then being the greatest, if not the only benefit they are likely to derive for their perseverance *in service and injured*<sup>403</sup> fortunes, they become more and more tenacious of its value, and attend the distribution of it with a watchful eye. I have been rather prolix on this subject, *but thought*<sup>404</sup> it incumbent on me to assign the reasons which govern my opinion, because I wish you to be convinced,<sup>405</sup> *that I do not want inclination to comply where I can do it consistently with any of your wishes.* With very great esteem and regard,

I am, Dr Sir,

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> and

Affecte Hble Servt,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excellcy,

Joseph Reed, Esq.

<sup>399</sup> S. "on the one."

<sup>400</sup> S. "the."

<sup>401</sup> S. "need."

<sup>402</sup> S. "at work."

<sup>403</sup> S. "in the service" "and for their injured."

<sup>404</sup> S. "but I thought."

<sup>405</sup> S. "that I do not want inclination to comply with your wishes, in any instance when it is within the reach of my power consistently to aid them."

## XXX.

MORRISTOWN, *May 28th*, 1780.\*

DEAR SIR,

<sup>406</sup> *I am much obliged to you* <sup>408</sup> S. Omitted.  
*for your favor of the 23d.*—No-

thing could be more necessary than the aid given by your State towards supplying us with provision.—I assure you every idea you can form of our distresses will fall short of the reality.—There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery that it begins at length to be worn out—and we see in every line of the army the most serious features of mutiny and sedition.—All our departments—all our operations are at a stand—and unless a system very different from that *which for a long*<sup>407</sup> time prevailed be immediately adopted throughout the States, our affairs must soon become desperate—beyond the possibility of recovery.

<sup>407</sup> S. “which has for a long time.”

If you were on the spot, my dear sir, if you could see what difficulties surround us on every side—how unable we are to administer to the most ordinary calls of the service—you would be convinced that these expressions are not too strong, *and*

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\* This is in the Letter Book.

*that we have almost ceased to hope.*<sup>408</sup>—The country in general is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interest,<sup>409</sup> that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better.

<sup>408</sup> S. "and that we have everything to dread. Indeed I have almost ceased to hope."

<sup>409</sup> S. "interests."

The Committee of Congress in their late address to the several States have given a just picture of our situation,—I very much doubt its making the desired impression, and if it does not, I shall consider our lethargy as incurable.—The present juncture is so interesting that if it does not produce correspondent exertions, it will be a proof that motives of honor, public good and even self-preservation have lost their influence upon our minds.—This is a decisive moment—one of the most (I will go further and say *the most*) important America has seen.—The Court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance, and, if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind; nor can we, after that, venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what it will appear we want inclination or ability to assist them in.

Every view of our own cir-

cumstances ought to determine us to the most vigorous efforts; but there are considerations of another kind that should have equal weight—The combined fleets of France and Spain last year were greatly superior to those of the enemy—*The enemy nevertheless*<sup>410</sup> sustained no material damage, and at the close of the campaign *have given*<sup>411</sup> a very important blow to our allies.—This campaign the difference between the fleets from every account I have been able to collect will be *very*<sup>412</sup> considerable—indeed it is far from clear that there will not be an equality—What are we to expect will be the case if there should be another campaign?—In all probability the advantage will be on the side of the English, and then what will become of America?—We ought not to deceive ourselves.—The maritime resources of Great Britain are more substantial and real than those of France and Spain united.—Her commerce is more extensive than that of both her rivals; and it is an axiom that the Nation which has the most extensive commerce will always have the most powerful marine. Were these arguments less convincing the fact speaks for itself—her progress in the course

<sup>410</sup> S. “Nevertheless the enemy.”

<sup>411</sup> S. “gave.”

<sup>412</sup> S. “very” omitted.



of the last year is an incontestible proof.

It is true that France in a manner created a Fleet in a very short space, and this may mislead us in the judgment we form of her naval abilities. But if they bore any comparison with those of Great Britain how comes it to pass that, with all the force of Spain added, she has lost so much ground in so short a time as now to have scarcely a superiority. We should consider what was done by France as a violent and unnatural effort of the government which for want of sufficient foundation cannot continue to operate proportionable effects.

In modern wars, the longest purse must chiefly determine the event—I fear that of the enemy will be found to be so—though the Government is deeply in debt and of course poor, the Nation is rich and their riches afford a fund which will not be easily exhausted.—Besides, their system of public credit is such that it is capable of greater exertion than that of any other nation. Speculatists have been a long time foretelling its downfall, but we see no symptoms of the catastrophe being very near.—I am persuaded that it will at least last

out the war, and then in the opinion of many of the best politicians it will be a national advantage.—If the war should terminate successfully, the crown will have acquired such influence and power that it may attempt anything—and a bankruptcy will probably be made a ladder to climb to absolute authority. *Administration*<sup>413</sup> may perhaps wish to drive matters to this issue—at any rate they will not be restrained by an apprehension of it from forcing the resources of the State. It will promote their present purposes on which their all is at stake, and it may pave the way to triumph more effectually over the constitution.—With this disposition, I have no doubt that ample means will be found to prosecute the war with the greatest vigor.

France is in a very different position. The abilities of her present financier *has*<sup>414</sup> done wonders.—By a wise administration of the revenues, aided by advantageous loans, he has avoided the necessity of additional taxes.—But I am well informed, if the war continues another campaign, he will be obliged to have recourse to the taxes usual in time of war which are very heavy—and which the

<sup>413</sup> S. "The administration."

<sup>414</sup> S. "have."

people of France are not in condition to indure *for any duration*.<sup>415</sup> — When this necessity commences, France makes war on ruinous terms; and England from her individual wealth will find much greater facility in supplying her exigencies.

<sup>415</sup> S. "for a long time."

Spain derives great wealth from her mines, but not so great as is generally imagined. Of late years, the profit to government is essentially diminished—Commerce and industry are the best *means*<sup>416</sup> of a nation; both which are wanting to her. I am told her treasury is far from being so well filled as we have flattered ourselves—she is also much divided on the propriety of the war—there is a strong party against it. The temper of the nation is too sluggish to admit of great exertions—and though the Courts of the two Kingdoms are closely linked together, there never has been in any of their wars a perfect harmony of measures, nor has it been the case in this; which has already been no small detriment to the common cause.

<sup>416</sup> S. "mines."

I mention these things to show that the circumstances of our allies, as well as our own, call for peace; to obtain which, we must make one great effort this campaign.—The present in-

stance of the friendship of the Court of France is attended with every circumstance that can render it important and agreeable; that can interest our gratitude or fire our emulation. If we do our duty we may even hope to make the campaign decisive *on this Continent*.<sup>417</sup>—But we must do our duty in earnest—or disgrace and ruin will attend us.—I am sincere in declaring a full persuasion that the succour will be fatal to us, if our measures are not adequate to the emergency.

<sup>417</sup> S. “of this contest.”

Now, my dear sir, I must observe to you, that much will depend on the State of Pennsylvania—She has it in her power to contribute without comparison more to our success than any other State; in the two essential articles of flour and transportation.—New York, Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland are our flour countries;—Virginia *went little on this article*<sup>418</sup> the last crop (and her resources are called for to the Southward).—New York, by Legislative coercion, has already given all she could spare for the use of the army. Her inhabitants are left with scarcely a sufficiency for their own subsistence—Jersey, from being so long the place of the army’s residence is equally

<sup>418</sup> S. “produced little of this article.”

exhausted.—Maryland has made great exertions; but she can still do something more—Delaware may contribute handsomely in proportion to her extent—But Pennsylvania is our chief dependence—From every information I can obtain, she is at this time full of flour.—I speak to you in the language of frankness and as a friend.—I do not mean to make any insinuations unfavourable to the State.—I am aware of the embarrassments the government labours under from the open opposition of one party and the underhand intrigues of another.—I know that with the best dispositions to promote the public service you have been obliged to move with circumspection.—But this is a time to hazard and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity and give their support—The hopes and fears of the people at large may be acted upon in such a manner as to make them approve and second your views.

*The*<sup>419</sup> matter is reduced to a point—either Pennsylvania must give us all the aid we ask of her, or we can undertake nothing. We must renounce every idea of a co-operation, and must confess to our allies that we look

<sup>419</sup> S. "This."

wholly to them for our safety—This will be a state of humiliation and littleness against which the feelings of every good American ought to revolt.—Yours, I am convinced, will.—Nor have I the least doubt that you will employ all your influence to animate the legislature and the people at large.—The fate of these States hangs upon it—God grant we may be properly impressed with the consequences.

I wish the legislature could be engaged to vest the executive with Plenipotentiary powers. I should then expect everything practicable from your abilities and zeal. This is not a time for formality or ceremony.—The crisis in every point of view is extraordinary—and extraordinary expedients are necessary—I am decided in this opinion.

I am happy to hear that you have a prospect of complying with the requisitions of Congress for specific supplies—that the spirit of the City and State seems to revive and the warmth of *party decline*.<sup>420</sup>—These are good omens of our success—Perhaps this is the proper period to unite.

I am obliged to you for the renewal of your assurances of personal regard—<sup>421</sup>*My sentiments for you, you are too well*

<sup>420</sup> S. "to decline."

<sup>421</sup> S. "You are too well acquainted with my sentiments."

*acquainted with* to make it necessary to tell you with how much esteem and regard I am,

Dr Sir,

Yr most obedt and affe  
Hble Servt,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

<sup>423</sup> *I felicitate you on the increase of your family. — Mrs. Washington does the same, and begs her particular respects and congratulations to Mrs. Reed — to which permit me to add mine.*

<sup>423</sup> S. P. S. omitted.

### XXXI.

HEAD QUARTERS, BERGEN COUNTY,  
July 4th, 1780.\*

MY DEAR SIR,

Motives of friendship, not less than of public good, induce me with freedom to give you my sentiments on a matter, which interests you personally as well as the good of the common cause. I flatter myself *you*<sup>423</sup> will receive what I say in the same spirit which dictates it, and that it will have all the influence <sup>424</sup>*circumstances* will possibly permit.

<sup>423</sup> S. "that you."

<sup>424</sup> S. "which."

The Legislature of Pennsylvania has vested you in case of necessity, with a power of declaring Martial Law throughout the State, to enable you to take

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\* This is in the Letter Books.

such measures as the exigency may demand; so far the Legislature has done its part.—Europe—America—the State itself will look to you for the rest.—The power vested in you will admit of all the latitude that could be desired, and may be made to mean anything <sup>425</sup>*the public safety* may require—If it is not exerted proportionably, you will be responsible for the consequences.

<sup>425</sup> S. “which.”

Nothing, my dear Sir, can be more delicate and critical than your situation—a full discretionary power lodged in your hands in conjunction with the Council—great expectations in our allies and in the People of this country—ample means in the State for great exertions of every kind—a powerful party on one hand to take advantage of every opening to prejudice you—on the other popular indolence and avarice averse to every measure inconsistent with present ease and present interest—In this dilemma there is a seeming danger, whatever side you take; it remains to choose that which has least real danger, and will best promote the public weal. This in my opinion clearly is to exert the powers entrusted to you with a boldness and vigor suited to the emergency.



In general, I esteem it a good maxim that the best way to preserve the confidence of the people durably, is to promote their true interest—there are particular exigencies when this maxim has peculiar force—When any great object is in view, the popular mind is roused into expectation and prepared to make sacrifices both of ease and property; if those to whom *they*<sup>426</sup> confide the management of their affairs do not call them to make these sacrifices—and the object is not attained, or they are involved in the reproach of not having contributed as much as they ought to have done towards it—they will be mortified at the disappointment—they will feel the censure, and their resentment will rise against those who with sufficient authority have omitted to do what their interest and their honor required.—Extensive powers not exercised as far as was necessary have I believe scarcely ever failed to ruin the possessor—The Legislature and the People in your case would be very glad to excuse themselves by condemning you.—You would be assailed with blame from every quarter—and your enemies would triumph.

<sup>426</sup> S. “the people.”

The party opposed to you in Government are making great

efforts.—I am told the bank established for supplying the army is principally under the auspices of that party; it will undoubtedly give them great credit with the People, and you have no effectual way to counter-balance this but by employing all your influence and authority to render services proportioned to your station.—Hitherto, I confess to you frankly, my dear sir, I do not think your affairs are in the train which might be wished; and if Pennsylvania does not do its part fully, it is of so much importance in the general scale that we must fail of success, or limit our views to mere defence.

I have conversed with some gentlemen on the measure of filling your battalions—they seemed to think you could not exceed what the Legislature had done for this purpose.—*I am of a very different sentiment*<sup>427</sup>—The establishment of Martial Law implies, in my judgment, the right of calling any part of your citizens into military service, and in any manner which may be found expedient; and I have no doubt the draft may be executed.

I write to you with the freedom of friendship, and I hope you will esteem it the truest

<sup>427</sup> S. "I am of very different sentiments."

mark I could give you of it. In this view, whether you think my observations well founded or not, the motive will, I am persuaded, render them agreeable.

<sup>428</sup> *In offering my respects to Mrs.* <sup>428</sup> S. Omitted.

*Reed, I must be permitted to accompany them with a tender of my very warm acknowledgments to her and you, for the civilities and attention both of you have been pleased to show Mrs. Washington,—and for the honor you have done me in calling the young Christian by my name.*

With the greatest regard,

I am, Dr Sir,

Yr Affecte Hble Servt,

G<sup>d</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excely,

Joseph Reed, Esq.

## XXXII.

HEAD Q<sup>RS</sup>, PASSAIC FALLS,

Oct. 18th, 1780.\*

DEAR SIR,

By your favor of the third from Bethlehem, I perceive my letter of the first had not got to your hands; but I have the pleasure to find that the business you were upon anticipated the purposes of it, and was in a fair way to answer the end.

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\* This, I believe, is not in the Letter Books.

Arnold's conduct is so villainously perfidious, that there are no terms *that*<sup>429</sup> can describe the baseness of his heart—That overruling Providence which has so often and so remarkably interposed in our favor, never manifested itself more conspicuously than in the timely discovery of his horrid *intention to surrender*<sup>430</sup> the Post and Garrison of West Point into the hands of the Enemy.—I confine my remark to this single act of perfidy, for I am far from thinking he intended to hazard a defeat of this important object by combining another with it, altho' there were circumstances which led to a contrary belief.—The confidence and folly which *has*<sup>431</sup> marked the subsequent conduct of this man are of a piece with his villainy; and all three are perfect in their kind.

The interest you take in my supposed escape, and the manner in which you speak of it, claim my thanks as much as if he really had intended to involve my fate with that of the Garrison—and I consider it as a fresh instance of your affectionate regard for me.

As I do not recollect ever to have *held*<sup>432</sup> any very particular conversation with General Schuyler respecting Arnold,

<sup>429</sup> S. "which."

<sup>430</sup> S. "design of surrendering."

<sup>431</sup> S. "have."

<sup>432</sup> S. "had."

I should be glad to obtain a copy of the Letter in which you say my "opinion and confidence in him (Arnold) is conveyed in terms of affection and approbation."—Sometime before or after Arnold's return from Connecticut (the conversation made so little impression on me that I know not which) General Schuyler informed me he had received a letter from Arnold intimating his intention of joining the army and rendering such services as his leg would permit—adding that he was incapable of active service—but could discharge the duties of a stationary command, without much inconvenience or uneasiness to his leg.—I answered that as we had a prospect of an active and vigorous campaign, I should be glad of General Arnold's aid and assistance, but saw little prospect of his obtaining such a command as appeared to be the object of his wishes, because it was my intention to draw my whole force into the field when we were in circumstances to commence our operations against New York, leaving even *West Point* to the care of Invalids and a small Garrison of Militia; but if after this previous declaration, the command of *that*<sup>433</sup> 433 S. "the." Post—for the reasons he as-

signed—would be more convenient and agreeable to him, than a command in the field, I should readily indulge him—having had it hinted to me by a very respectable character, a member of Congress (not Gen<sup>l</sup> Schuyler) that a measure of this kind would not be unacceptable to the State most immediately interested in the welfare, and safety, of the Post.

This, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, is every syllable that ever passed between General Schuyler and me respecting Arnold, or any of his concerns—the manner, and the matter, appeared perfectly uninteresting to both of us at the time. He seemed to have no other view in communicating the thing than because he was requested to do it—and my answer, dictated by circumstances, you already have—but how it was communicated the letter will shew.

That *this Gentle<sup>434</sup>* (Gen<sup>l</sup> Schuyler) possesses a share of my regard and confidence I shall readily acknowledge—a pretty long acquaintance with him—an opinion of his abilities—his intimate knowledge of our circumstances—his candor, as far as I have had opportunities of forming a judgment of it—added to

<sup>434</sup> S. "That Gen<sup>l</sup> Schuyler."

personal civilities and proofs of a warm friendship, which I never had a doubt of, would leave me without excuse were I to withhold these from him.

What ascendancy he may have over the army is more than I can tell—but I should not be surprized if he stands in a favourable point of view with respect to their esteem.—The means he took to acquire a true knowledge of their distresses, while he was with *it*<sup>435</sup>—the representations he made to procure relief—and his evident endeavours to promote the objects for which he was appointed—*seems*<sup>436</sup> to have made this a natural consequence. 435 S. “them.”

<sup>437</sup> *That part of your letter which respects the exchange of prisoners will be made the subject of a particular letter—and shall accompany this.* 437 S. Omitted.

With great esteem and regard,  
I am, Dr Sir,  
Y<sup>r</sup> most obed<sup>t</sup> and affe  
Hble Serv<sup>t</sup>,  
G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

## XXXIII.

HEAD Q<sup>RS</sup>, 20th Nov. 1780.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 15th is just come to hand. I cannot suffer

myself to delay a moment in pronouncing<sup>438</sup> if Arnold by the words (in his letter to his wife)

<sup>438</sup> S. "that."

"I am treated with the greatest  
"politeness by General Washing-  
"ton and the officers of the army  
"who bitterly execrate Mr. Reed  
"and the Council for their vil-  
"lainous attempt to injure me,"  
meant to comprehend me in the  
latter part of the expression, that  
he asserted an absolute falsehood.

It was at no time my inclination, much less my intention to become a party in his cause—and I certainly could not be so lost to my own character as to become a partizan at the moment I was called upon *officially* to bring him to trial.\*

I am not less mistaken if he has not extended the former part of the paragraph a *little* too far. True it is he *self*-envited some civilities I never meant to shew him (or any officer in arrest)—and he received rebuke before I could convince him of the impropriety of his entering upon a justification of his conduct in my presence—and for bestowing such illiberal abuse, as he seemed disposed to do, upon those whom he denominated his persecutors.

Although you have done me the justice to disbelieve Arnold's

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\* The Italics are those of the autograph.



assertion to his wife, a regard to  
my own feelings claims a de-  
claration of the falsehood of it  
from, Dear Sir,

Y<sup>r</sup> most obed<sup>t</sup> and affect<sup>e</sup>

H<sup>ble</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>,

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

His Excell<sup>y</sup>,

Joseph Reed, Esq.













